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From the profane to the sublime : power and paradoxes of Marlowe's Tamburlaine

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FROM THE PROFANE TO THE SUBLIME

POWER AND PARADOXES OF MARLOWE'S TAMBURLAINE

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By

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ABSTRACT

FROM THE PROFANE TO THE SUBLIME
POWER AND PARADOXES OF MARLOWE'S TAMBURLAINE

by
Beatrice Haile-Wells

This thesis addresses Christopher Marlowe's play Tamburlaine the Great, written in Elizabethan England when "ambition" equalled sin. I have researched multiple religious, philosophical and social ideas about both the author, Marlowe, and his protagonist, Tamburlaine, identifying important paradoxes and reasons for them. Contradictions within Tamburlaine's profanity and savagery blend easily with the sublimely honorable.

Powerful paradoxes carry the play into the heart of the audience which relates to the turmoil of both Marlowe and Tamburlaine who each bring close-up views of problems found in everyman's rise to power over his own soul. Tamburlaine shows us how the paradoxical, profane and sublime actions of a king can relate to any ordinary man.

I have attempted to illuminate the tragedy within Tamburlaine's complex paradoxes which shape his life, and to make a contribution to a philosophically complex and thought provoking, tragic play.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Certainly in its artistic techniques and its overall structure the play Tamburlaine does not reflect all one would expect of traditional Elizabethan drama, nor does it follow the dicta of sixteenth-century religion in England and the "Chain of Being" ideology. But according to some, it does lean toward "Reformation Humanism" in its mixture of religious and secular tenants. "The parts and whole of Tamburlaine pattern demonstratively in accord with certain formulas and chief doctrines of Elizabethan Humanism" (Battenhouse, Preface viii). Battenhouse continues on to inform us that "Reformation Humanism stands free of the church but has a mortal horror of breaking free of God." The message and theme of Tamburlaine refect this ideology very well as the play proves out the folly of the seven deadly sins, and offers what is essentially a simple answer to the question of how man achieves final and eternal peace within himself.

Even though Marlowe left little behind in the nature of papers, letters or diaries, one can find many sources of

influence upon him--some historical and some philosophical--prominent figures such as Machiavelli, Sidney, Spenser, et. al., who enriched his background. We can see in Tamburlaine the impressions of both Marlowe's schooling as well as Elizabethan traditions and their impact on him. They appear to have created a rebellious genius in the formation of Marlowe's adult thinking and might explain the many complex aspects of his behavior. The moral lesson which runs throughout the play, however, is compatible with the strict moral values of Elizabethan times. The lowly shepherd Tamburlaine crashing down on kingdoms and their absolute codes of classicism perhaps reflects Marlowe's adult recalcitrance and determination to rise above the subjugation of his commoner birth which then allows him to hob-knob with the knighted and break free of the rigid Elizabethan traditions. Tamburlaine breaks these traditions for himself with the greatest of ease. All of which, of course, leads us directly to the central topic of the play, "ambition," and also leads us to believe that Marlowe, as well as his protagonist, has more than his fair share of these proclivities.

The successful advent of Marlowe's Tamburlaine speaks well for the dramatist's ability as a poet as well as a dramatist. Marlowe brought to the English stage a new and startling "majestic blank verse," giving birth to his 'mighty line' as it was dubbed by Ben Jonson (Ingram 41). The success of the play was especially notable in these times because Marlowe rose to these heights despite England's strict insistence upon the need to obey religious and moral laws. Marlowe's play was not only a daring character study, profane and surprisingly popular, but it was also one which placed the author at the top of the list of successful dramatists in England.

Tamburlaine, a play written in an original and unique form of blank verse, brings out many paradoxes in the character of the protagonist. And even though the play Tamburlaine was taken in a large part from the legend of a fourteenth-century conqueror, "Timur the Lame" (Tamburlaine, J. W. Harper, ed., Introduction ix), strangely enough the youthful, more modern aspects of the poet Christopher Marlowe seem to come through as one reads the play; aspects which parallel the ambivalent and complex nature of the

character Tamburlaine in many ways.

Perhaps because Marlowe, himself, was initially a dedicated divinity student at Cambridge as well as someone who eventually struggled with religious beliefs--he was labelled an "athiest and homosexual and Machiavellian amoralist" (J. W. Harper, ed., Introduction xxviii)--Tamburlaine is likewise a complex and paradoxical figure. He is strictly a pagan and considers himself a "god," whose mission is to conquer the world, but he displays intermittant personality changes from the barbarous, cold and remorseless conqueror to the gentle, empathetic and exquisitely caring lover of Zenocrate.

Tamburlaine almost embodies one character within another--one character mirroring another in extreme opposition. Tamburlaine, in his unremitting conquest of "The mighty Soldan of Egyptia" (I.ii.6), hastens to assure his daughter, Princess Zenocrate, that "I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove, / And yet a shepherd by my parentage" (I.ii.34.35). Tamburlaine is comfortable with both positions; although his war is fought for the common man whom he represents in their conflict against despots,

paradoxically he appears to want to become a despot himself. He easily drops his shepherd's robes to display lordly armour and a warrior's garb beneath and equally as easily, he attempts to become a guardian angel to Zenocrate and her father, changing, paradoxically, from a "terror of the world" to an angel. He placates the Soldan:

> 'Twas I my lord that gat the victory,
> And therefore grieve not at your overthrow,
> Since I shall render all unto your hands,
> And add more strength to your dominions
> Than ever yet confirmed th' Egyptian crown.
> (V.ii.381-85)

And to Zenocrate he says:

> Then sit thou down divine Zenocrate,
> And here we crown thee Queen of Persia,
> And all the kingdoms and dominions
> That late the power of Tamburlaine subdued.
> (V.ii.42-45)

These romantic and lyrical characterizations contrast with Tamburlaine's violent brutality like lightening against a black and moonless sky. The paradoxical character of Tamburlaine startles and shocks the reader into a curious attention. In short, he takes us from the sublime to the profane in his opposing behavior. It is precisely this kaleidoscopic shifting of tone, imagery, and characterization which keeps the story line alive and the reader alert.

The underlying theme of the story is man's ability to conquer himself. I hope to demonstrate that the play most likely grew out of unresolved tensions within Marlowe, himself, and reflects his need to resolve those tensions. Tamburlaine, briefly, is founded upon paradox and is essentially a study of the way man conquers his own soul.

One can scarcely discuss Tamburlaine without first discussing the author Chrisopher Marlowe. Marlowe preceded Shakespeare by several months in beginning his career as a playright, gaining fame as a literary genius in his seven productive years before his untimely death at the age of twenty-nine. He lived from February 6, 1564 to May 30, 1593. In these limited years he managed to leave behind some meteoric and colorfully explosive works. One may wonder what maturity might have brought to his already overwhelming dynamics of illusion.

Marlowe was born in Canterbury, England, the son of a shoemaker and tanner and a mother who was the daughter of a clergyman. As a young boy, he attended King's school--a school for the upper class and knighted individuals. As a commoner, Marlowe qualified by reason of having proved

himself "apt" by those recommending lower-class students. He was selected as one of three boys to matriculate at Cambridge where he received both his BA and MA degrees. Marlowe's MA was requested by the Queen and Privy Council. His selected discipline was the Divinity which he finally dropped entirely.

Word has it that Marlowe was not a "soldier from the low company," as had been reported, but rather a "'spy' [for the government] from before the Armada to the end of his life." (British Authors: Before 1800 341). This, however, remains a controversial issue. Marlowe's life ended early on in the Tavern of Eleanor Bull, where he supped with three friends--one of whom (Ingram Frizer) "was supposed to have murdered him; all were known government spies" (British Authors: Before 1800 342). And, of course, he eventually became a writer of renown.

As a youth, Marlowe was an ideal student, serious and studious. As a commoner at Canterbury, he used caution and balance in his actions and displayed superior academic performance. These attitudes gained Marlowe high praise and entrances to superior institutions of learning. "He

[Marlowe] had worked his way through the whole curriculum and besides completing his six years' terms of residence [at Cambridge], had attained to his Master of Arts dignity [degree, sic] in so respectable a way that in later times his name would have appeared among the Wranglers; . . ." (Ingram 31). I might add here that while matriculating at Cambridge he received a stipend which allowed him to live comfortably.

As a Canterbury student he was recogized by authorities as a genius. Devoted to his studies, Marlowe didn't mix with the youthful recalcitrants at school. And although he had chosen to study Divinity in early school, he came to "irreconcilable contradictions" (Ingram 42), which precluded his pursuing that particular field of study, as well as other attempted disciplines such as Medicine, Law, Philosophy and Logic. Literature was about the only field left for him to choose, and one that befitted his talents.

As a young adult out of school Marlowe began to display wild and recalcitrant behavior in public places and he was arrested on charges of "atheism and immorality, May, 1593" (British Authors: Before 1800 342. But whether or not

Marlowe was technically an "atheist" has not been established. He surely rejected his earlier religious beliefs (we can see evidence of his mental struggles in Dr. Faustus), but some of his critics stated that he never repudiated his belief in the one and only diety; in fact, he "retained faith in a Supreme Being" (Ingram 41). "Atheism" was not in those days necessarily a disbelief in God, but more a term referring to an alleged "bad person." Elizabethans defined atheism "loosely and largely in terms of conduct 'an Atheist or most badde man--daredevil figure of desperation'" (Battenhouse 41-42). Burton considered an athiest "essentially an insane person . . . a monstrous melancholy" (Battenhouse 45), and that sense of the word may describe Marlowe in his later years.

Marlowe, in any case, escaped his summons from the Privy Council for "atheism" and ran off to Deptford where he met with his three male companions in the Tavern. The rest is history, for here is where he was stabbed in the eye and died.

In death Marlowe left behind a rich legacy of literature and a great measure of personal fame. Tamburlaine

had been the first production of a successful play in blank verse. Although Gorbaduc initiated the case of blank verse, Marlowe's verse was more polished as "it marked the first appearance of true blank verse--not mere undeciphered decasyllables--on the stage" (British Authors: Before 1800 342). And it was ecstatically received by other English dramatists and their audience. Dr. Faustus, Dido, Edward II, and Hero and Leander, as well as Tamburlaine and other works also reflect Marlowe's greatness as a poet and dramatist. They each reflect the personal paradoxes suffered by Marlowe; we see in each text the love-hate attitude Marlowe felt for himself. Somehow we are always aware of Marlowe's presence, both on stage and in the very lines of his poetry--all torments seem to belong partly to the author's personal agonies. This is not true of Shakespeare, with whom Marlowe has been compared, for Shakespeare's presence is nowhere in sight in his plays.

We might ask ourselves why this young man in his early twenties, an ex-Divinity student, chose to write a non-Aristotlean tragedy, a play depicting a monstrous, irreverent, blood-thirsty and triumphant world conqueror. This has long

been a controversial question, and one we shall examine here. Possibly, it's the result of the mind's seeking balance in the psyche. A youthful lad of exquisitely perfect behavior who repudiated the recalcitrants in school and then followed a devoted study for the Divinity may have had to eventually give vent to his wild side.

Chapter II

From the Profane to the Sublime

Power and Paradoxes of Marlowe's Tamburlaine

It appears patently obvious that Marlowe in his later years behaved the young scamp. His jokes and iconoclastic opinions became more and more obvious attacks on society. Marlowe said everything and anything he felt like saying, as if he thought he had some kind of license to denigrate. He attacked "time-honored faiths and antique superstitions." He attacked "priests on their restless prayers, scoffed at defeated Monarchs" (Ingram 43); but as Ingram explains, he remained careful "only to attack individuals and not the system itself" (Ingram 42). However, he came close to attacking the system when he attacked the divine right of the king as the "Scourge of God" in Tamburlaine--a dangerous thing to do in Elizabethan England where the monarch was widely held to be God's lieutenant and barely divisible from the "system." But we have to remember that apparently Marlowe, from a lad, was favored by the Queen and Privy Council, so I suppose one might say that he got away with murder when he "derides and proves the impotence of human

creeds and the instability and regal institutions" (Ingram 43) and further underscores his paradoxical nature with a contradictory breaking of his own rule of attacking individuals only, in Tamburlaine.

Marlowe shows us "ancient crumbling monarchs before the low-born shepherd-warrior [Tamburlaine] . . . spiritual powers claimed by priests dissolve as clouds before his material might" (Ingram 43). Marlowe was not viewed as a politically oriented person, but we can't help but see his politics, as pointed out in the messages in Tamburlaine, Dr. Faustus, and The Jew of Malta. Depicted in the Scythian warrior is an "insatiable desire for domination over temporalities of the world; for kingly power and despotic rule." Faustus sought to represent the "subjugation of minds of weaker men by stronger mental powers, but by power enforced by spiritual instead of physical means" (Ingram 72). Barabbas sought to obtain power of wealth. Faustus by results of study, sought to control those around him. Essentially, Tamburlaine is about everyman's internal struggle to conquer himself, to find peace within himself by resolving the paradoxes inherent in man. While Elizabethans

condemned the sin of ambition, the nature of man never has. On the contrary man inherently is drawn toward ambition. Dicta may come and go but man's basic instincts never change. Ambition is Tamburlaine's primary character trait and as such carries the central theme of the play. Tamburlaine is substantially about the morals of man. We find man struggling with his appetites in all genres; he struggles to fulfill needs and desires--he looks to be somebody, somehow. Each one of us proceeds according to his own strength and ability and in the best way he knows how. Tamburlaine proceeds by exercising terror, power and fear; he has trained himself to hate in order to conquer; his outrageous acts are a result of this and would seem to preclude an inherently loving nature. Nevertheless, Tamburlaine discovers the value of basic human goodness in the very process of acting in a way counter to what one generally thinks of as virtuous. Marlowe shows us the necessity of experiencing the profane in order to reach the sublime and of developing the ability to differentiate between the two.

For us to understand these lessons we must first view Tamburlaine through the eyes of Elizabethan morality where

ambition was a deadly sin, and not through the eyes of modern-day America where ambition is sometimes regarded as a virtue.

Tamburlaine admonishes the reader thus:

> My royal chair of state shall be advanced:
> And he that means to place himself therein
> Must armed wade up to his chin in blood.
> (II.I.iv.82-84)

And son Amyras adds to the bloody rebellious diction:

> And I would strive to swim through pools of blood
> . . . Ere I would lose the title of a king.
> (II.I.iv.92-95)

All of which gives the lie to some critics who find Marlowe's Tamburlaine "a young man's dream" (Ingram 45). Marlowe brings back to life the legendary "Timur the Lame" in all his infamous immorality. Marlowe writes about suppression, not fancy, and why dictators prohibit man's seeking freedom and liberty. He writes about tyrants and "centuries of mental oppression, priesthood and monarchy and the rigid limits built up between man against man" (Ingram 44).

Tamburlaine, however, thinks he works as God's representative. He seeks to serve God as his "scourge"

(Battenhouse 100). Surely Tamburlaine is a classical "Scourge" by virtue of his own declaration to Theridamas after stealing him away from his king, Mycetes; "I . . . am termed the Scourge and Wrath of God, / The only fear and terror of the world," he claims (III.iii.44-45). Moreover, in the end he achieves a resignation in which he sees the light and accepts his defeat with remarkable grace. Despite this, Tamburlaine manages to maintain his usual position of control when suggesting that death might mean his elevation above the "earthly" to perhaps reign in the heavenly sphere, "that earth cannot contain him" (Waith in Leech 86) and that Jove esteems him "too good for earth" (IV.iii.60). He says that "Jove might make him a star" (Wraith in Leech 86).

> In vain I strive and rail against those powers
> That mean t'invest me in a higher throne,
> As much too high for this disdainful earth.
> (II.VI.iii.120-22)

Tamburlaine sees an almost insurmountable defeat looming before him in the form of Theridamas and his thousand horses approaching Tamburlaine's measly five-hundred foot soldiers, "'odds against Tamburlaine's 500 foot' . . . are too great to stand against" (I.ii.121-22).

So, when Theridamas appears, we witness a stroke of genius on Tamburlaine's part. He will ally himself with Theridamas' 1000 horsemen and troups. He also orders his sparkling spoils of goods and gems laid out in order to further intimidate the overwhelming troups before him. Tamburlaine considers his priorities. Sizing up the situation he poses a rhetorical question to his troups--whether to fight or reason verbally and overwhelm them with his oratory:

> Then shall we fight courageously with them,
> Or look you, I should play the orator?
> (I.ii.128-29)

Tamburlaine decides on the use of his wits and sharp oratory as his best weapons to seduce Theridamas. So, coupled with confidence and stature of power, he launches into a powerfully irresistible oratory of acute persuasion and charms the attacking Theridamas with offerings of all the advantages and temptations available should he decide to join Tamburlaine.

Already Theridamas has been thunderstruck by the elegant picture of Tamburlaine on first sight:

> His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods,
> His fiery eyes are fix'd upon the earth,

> As if he now devis'd some stratagem:
> . . . . . .
> To pull the triple-headed dog from hell!
> (I.ii.157-59, 61)

Theridamas' admiring observations are noted by Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine returns the compliment in kind: "With what a majesty he rears his looks" (I.ii.165). He then hastens to add an empathetic observation, suggesting that such a personage as himself [Theridamas] should not suffer as the victim of his king, Mycetes. "In thee, thou valiant man of Persia, / I see the folly of thy emperor" (I.ii.166-67). He further entices Theridamas:

> If thou wilt stay with me, renowned man,
> And lead thy thousand horse with my conduct,
> Besides thy share of this Egyptian prize,
> Those thousand horse shall sweat with martial spoil
> Of conquered Kingdoms, and of cities sacked.
> (I.ii.188-92)

So, Tamburlaine's remarkable oratory works and Theridamas softens into a pliable subject in Tamburlaine's hands. "Noble and mild this Persian seems to be, / If outward habit judge the inward man" (I.ii.162-63), so Tamburlaine need use only a gentle urging: "Forsake thy king and do but join with me / And we will triumph over all the world" (I.ii.172-73). Tamburlaine is keenly aware that

a negative Theridamas spells defeat for him. Despite the odds against him Tamburlaine takes the offensive, admonishing him:

> I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
> And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about,
> And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere,
> Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.
> Draw forth thy sword, thou mighty man-at-arms,
> Intending but to raze my charmed skin:
> And Jove himself will stretch his hand from heaven,
> To ward the blow, and shield me safe from harm.
> (I.ii.174-81)

Tamburlaine's Herculean will, his looks that "dare the gods," and belief in his force against all comers, benumbs Theridamas' aggression and compels him and his opponents to obey orders, paradoxically, even in the face of a total advantage over Tamburlaine. This is the beginning of a lifelong and devoted alliance. From the time of Tamburlaine's conquest of the first king, Theridamas becomes a part of all the future conquests--he is rewarded by Tamburlaine, respected and loved by him for a liftime. This paradoxically honorable side of an otherwise brutal man, Tamburlaine, shows us the Ying and Yang of his character. And the paradox of his character is reflected in many events throughout the play. Theridamas' head swirls with awe from

this seductive rhetoric:

> Not Hermes prolocutor to the gods,
> Could use persuasions more pathetical.
> (I.ii.210-11)

And pathetical [moving] Tamburlaine is, for Theridamas is moved like one in a trance, to yield. Closing his oratorical victory over Theridamas, Tamburlaine promises him:

> Nor are Apollo's oracles more true,
> Than thou shalt find my vaunts substantial.
> (I.ii.212-13)

This is not to sell Theridamas short--Tamburlaine judged him correctly--but to show the powerfully irresistible appeal Tamburlaine uses to get his own way even in the face of virtual defeat and against all odds. Theridamas is only too aware of his ruler's weakness and the disastrous consequences for his country. He also recognizes the great Tamburlaine's strength and superior ability so he seizes the opportunity to put his excellent services to better use.

> What strong enchantments tice my yielding soul?
> Ah, these resolved noble Scythians!
> (I.ii.224-25)

And as Theridamas yields questions arise: "But shall I prove a traitor to my king"? he asks. Fears quickly scotched, Tamburlaine warmly assures: "No, but the trusty

friend of Tamburlaine" (I.ii.226-27). Then, finally submitting:

> Won with thy words, and conquered with thy looks,
> I yield myself, my men and horse to thee.
> (I.ii.228-29)

We find Tamburlaine having his way in many seemingly impossible instances, even in death where Tamburlaine is the real victor over the inevitable conqueror:

> Farewell my boys, my dearest friends, farewell,
> My body feels, my soul doth weep to see
> Your sweet desires deprived my company,
> For Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God must die.
> (II.V.iii.245-48)

The almost tongue-in-cheek remark in these lines is understandable when we realize that Tamburlaine not only has succumbed to his fate, but he has, in several ways also overcome the stark reality of death. For one thing he will continue to live on in the body of his sons who will continue to "Scourge" in his name but he also, in effect, conquers death as well for he feels that, after all, he probably will be elevated above his position on this common ground, earth. So, in the third line of Tamburlaine's farewell verse to his sons, supra, he winks at them as he hopes perhaps, to rule again in a higher place and leave them to

finish conquering the world in his likeness. In this attitude we find both the abject mortal accepting his fate, as he must, and the God-like attitude of his sons being in his image plus his own immortality--a paradox not unexpected in the behavior of Tamburlaine.

> By equal portions into both your breasts:
> My flesh divided in your precious shapes,
> Shall still retain my spirit, though I die,
> And live in all your souls immortally.
> (II.V.iii.171-74)

So, paradoxically, Tamburlaine takes hold of the hand of death gratefully and goes on with him to find his elevated rule; even though death wins easily the skirmish, Tamburlaine remains the victor of the battlefield in his own mind. For, as he had said before, "sickness or death can never conquer me" (II.V.i.220). It is remarkable the way Tamburlaine manages to have things both ways, if necessary. He cautions Amyras to " . . . tempt not Fortune so" (II.IV.i.84). This, despite the fact that "tempting Fortune" has long since been an active ingredient on the agenda of Tamburlaine's personal bible. And, in the same breath he urges Amyras to be a "Scourge," about which "tempting Fortune" is a large part. Furthermore, when

Amyras grieves for his father's pending death, Tamburlaine admonishes him to "Let not thy love exceed thine honour son" (II.V.iii.199), even though Tamburlaine had already demonstrated the elevation of such an act from which he merited so successfully with his absolute love of Zenocrate--a love not subordinate to honour nor his chief concern at that time.

Tamburlaine struggles to place one of these emotions above the other; ironically, he finds his ability to do so with Amyras. Somewhat Machiavellian, but not entirely, Tamburlaine bases his contradictions on what he wants at the time for himself and not on what the situation promises or threatens in the alternatives. Machiavellian ideology uses expediency to gain a tactical advantage whereas Tamburlaine uses it to satisfy an idea. And, once again we find the profane paradox of Tamburlaine, as well as the sublime, in these instances. From a "terror" to "self-righteous," from "pagan" to "conventional," Tamburlaine slips into and out of these positions as easily as he slipped from his garment of a Scythian shepherd to the garment of a lord and world conqueror. What is more, he does so in a way that satisfies

his audience. It is as if having things both ways were quite a common everyday occurrence and not the impossible task it really is. Nonetheless, Tamburlaine charms his audience with these high-swinging mental acrobatics.

It is interesting to note in the interchange between Tamburlaine and Theridamas that while it demonstrates how Tamburlaine gets his own way it also demonstrates how Theridamas' way becomes Tamburlaines'. Moreover, it shows us a major contrast between the two characters. It's as if Theridamas were the weight on the opposite end of the scale--a kind of alter ego to Tamburlaine, the soft note of harmony in strident notes of Tamburlaine's oratory. Unlike Tamburlaine who is driven by ambition, we find that Theridamas can take ambition or leave it. Theridamas says,

> A god is not so glorious as a king:
> I think the pleasure they enjoy in heaven
> Cannot compare with kingly joys in earth.
> (II.v.57-59)

At the same time, Tamburlaine asks: "Why Theridamas, wilt thou be a king?" (II.v.65). Theridamas shows us his easy-going character when he answers Tamburlaine, "Nay, though I praise it, I can live without it." (II.v.66). So between these two characters we discover a marvelous mediator--a

soft pedal on a too loud tone where we find Theridamas constantly acquiescent, softly supportive and ever admiring Tamburlaine's every move. And he seems to take this position with the special power of the "meek" who shall "inherit the earth," for Theridamas is also a strong person in his own right as he looks for a way to keep all things in balance and his master, Tamburlaine, happy. At times the two characters almost blur, as if one really needs to be a part of the other. In fact, this is exactly what happens in the play where Theridamas plays interference for Tamburlaine and rounds out the action of the play in the very necessary contrast and relief. Their characters tend to not only blend and work in an interlocking manner, but they also bring into play individual strength and contrasting tone. Again, perhaps Marlowe's personal dichotomy somehow slips into play here and shows us how opposite personality traits can not only pull against one another, but paradoxically mesh in a beautifully harmonious way; actually, it is in reality the Profane and the Sublime in concert. There are many other examples of contrast which will be discussed here; in fact the whole play is built on the interaction of

antithesis and they all contribute in their own individual and particular way to the overall sense of paradox Tamburlaine projects. Marlowe's art lies in his ability to integrate these personalities and personality traits so that they play off each other in ways that catch our fancy, make us wonder and perhaps cause us to drop a tear. We even laugh at some of the black comedy, as well as take offense. Cautiously, Marlowe has structured the play so that we don't really have time to feel any one of these emotions for any length of time, and this technique lets him and his Tamburlaine off the hook in many instances. Immediately after one dramatic event another "show" takes place and we rush to find out whatever is happening over there, so to speak. Meanwhile, Tamburlaine manages to repay those who serve him, and this may be the very glue that holds everything together in the final analysis.

> . . . . . I crown you here, Theridamas, King of Argier: Techelles, King of Fez: and Usumcasane, King of Morocco. How say you to this, Turk? These are not your contributory kings.
> (IV.iv.112-15)

Even though the three become kings and are given all of the rights and prerogatives and power of their majestic

positions, all the same, they never feel exactly like kings. They still see themselves as warriors serving Tamburlaine. More like figureheads, they lay their crowns before him after their conquests in the manner of top sargeants before their commanding general. In this turning over their crowns to Tamburlaine, it is as if they need to be reinstated and reassured of their positions. Also, one gets the impression that a real fear of their own inability to succeed without Tamburlaine lies in the extreme distress felt by them on the approaching loss of their leader. Tamburlaine's kings, like his sons, live only in his life. And this presents another extreme contrast between the great warriors and the near apotheosis of Tamburlaine which he has instated.

Tamburlaine is a masterpiece of contradiction where war is seen as a "Scourge and Wrath of God" and paradoxically "regarded as both justified (by sin) and condemned by (God)" (Battenhouse 110-11). Greville similarly condemns war but also justifies it as "Heaven's overriding power, 'The sword of justice and sinne of terror,'" (Battenhouse 111). Greville's interpretation of war is that it is a "form of rebellious pride grounded in man's sin." He writes: "Men

would be tyrants, tyrants would be gods." But he then adds: "Thus they become our scourges, we their rods," ("A Treatie of Warres" Stanza 229, in Battenhouse 111), implying that the evil of war serves God's ultimate purpose.

The original concept of a "Scourge of God" was "formulated by Isaiah long ago and applied to Tamburlaine by Fortescue and Whetstone who were 'Marlowe's principal sources for his story.'" In this concept we find "the paradox of heroic virtue tragically hell-bent; of human aspirations magnificently splendid but cruelly tyraneous" and of an "idealism misdirected into unwitting parody of divine majesty." (Battenhouse, Preface 2.xii.xiii). This paradox, which idealizes conquest with grandiose and so-called godly intentions, using devilish and sinful actions to do so ends up being overruled by a fairer and more compassionate providence and by the true God in heaven who exposes, finally, man's foolish ambitions. "La Primaudaye affirmed that for tyrants God has his owne secret but sure stroke of revenge--God will returne into their bosom the euill which they haue done" (Battenhouse 113). Battenhouse considers the "full meaning of 'the scourge' crucial to any

total reading of Tamburlaine." In the final analysis God punishes those who take "His revenge unto their own hands," and this despite the fact God "will use them for His own purposes to begin with, then, when He has used them destroy them utterly" (Battenhouse 113). This shows the tyrants while they are permitted chastisements of sin by God, He is "not helpless before their power" (Battenhouse 113). And this is the Catch Twenty-Two in which Tamburlaine finds himself. Essentially Tamburlaine commits evil acts in God's service. Marlowe thus demonstrates a basic ethical and religious ideology which is far more complex than the traditional, Judaic-Christian concept of good and evil typically seen in lesser writers of Elizabethan times.

The exhibition of Tamburlaine's blasphemy and evil exercises continues as he bellows out his unconscionable commands:

> Virgins, in vain ye labour to prevent
> That which mine honour swears shall be performed:
> Behold my sword, what see you at the point?
> O pity me:
> Away with them, I say, and show them Death.
> (V.ii.43-45, 56-57)

We find a singular kind of brutality evident. Not only are the victims here women (who one might expect should be

spared), but they are also virgins--it is as if Tamburlaine were killing babies. We must notice that Tamburlaine views the act as an expression of his "honour" and therefore not a carelessly vicious act. So, he is using a strange set of ethics to justify killing the virgins. The "haughty" enemy must die! And the "cowardly" must also die, for according to Tamburlaine, they are also are the enemy, even if one of them happens to be his own son, Calyphas. Once again, the all-powerful Tamburlaine becomes powerless, paradoxically a victim of his own frustrated rage that forces him to strike at his son Calyphas who abhors war as much as Tamburlaine worships it. Calyphas languishes in the tents playing cards with the soldiers while his brothers fight the bloody battle along with their father, Tamburlaine. Calyphas' father has him dragged out into the open where he upbraids him and then stabs him to death.

> Bastardly boy, sprung from some coward's loins,
> And not the issue of great Tamburlaine.
> (II.I.v.69-70)

It's difficult to believe that a man who loves his wife as Tamburlaine does could execute his own son by stabbing him, and furthermore repudiate the avowal we hear

him make supra, that Zenocrate has known no other man than Tamburlaine. Once again, facts do not enter into his purposes and paradoxically the two conflicting avowals seem to stand. It is basically this contrary character of Tamburlaine that stuns the reader. In executing his son, Tamburlaine is, in fact, trying to kill what he unconciously perceived to be weaknesses within his own soul. He kills part of himself, and this act represents a partial suicide, which ironically and paradoxically is also life-affirming in that it frees him from the painful reminder of weaknesses that were literally part of himself. We discover, finally, that Tamburlaine is a man who not only struggles to conquer the world, but one who also struggles to conquer his own soul, to find peace within himself by resolving the paradoxes inherent within him. Tamburlaine's ability to love is reflected in his devotion to his conquered Princess Zenocrate, daughter of the Solden of Egypt. In view of the outrages we witness when we first meet Tamburlaine, we find in these later scenes a surprisingly tender, gentle man willing to please Zenocrate at any cost to himself. Ruthlessly possessing his captives, at the same time displaying

a remarkably tender side, he is a lover of great persuasion and humility. We find a heart in this heartless, cruel creature as he approaches Zenocrate: "Disdains Zenocrate to live with me?" (I.ii.82). One of the most beautiful and lyrical descriptions of Zenocrate's beauty and worth capture the hearts of the audience who for one brief moment feel perhaps Tamburlaine isn't all bad:

> Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,
> Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
> Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills.
> (I.ii.87-89)

And he confesses: "But this is she with whom I am in love" (I.ii.108). These romantic and lyrical moments, however, don't square with the violent brutality Tamburlaine has afforded his captured. And as we see him giving everything to Zenocrate's father, the captured Soldan, we see the same paradox. Undoubtedly he catches himself in an admission of weakness for Zenocrate, with his heavenly praises of her.

> Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine,
> Than the possession of the Persian crown.
> (I.ii.90-91)

Keep in mind Tamburlaine's avowed:

> The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown,
> . . . . . .
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> . . . . . .
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.
> (II.vii.12, 20, 27)

Maybe Tamburlaine's overdoing his devotion to Zenocrate a bit and thereby leaving himself wide open for a ribbing from Techelles. Tamburlaine goes on all the same:

> A hundred Tartars shall attend on thee,
> Mounted on steeds, swifter than Pegasus.
> Thy garments shall be made of Median silk,
> Enchased with precious jewels of mine own:
> More rich and valurous than Zenocrate's.
> With milk-white harts upon an ivory sled,
> Thou shalt be drawn amidst the frozen poles,
> And scale the icy mountains' lofty tops:
> Which with thy beauty will be soon resolved.
> My martial prizes with five hundred men,
> Won on the fifty-headed Volga's waves,
> Shall all we offer to Zenocrate,
> And then myself to fair Zenocrate.
> (I.ii.93-105)

While the audience is transported by this lilting poetry, and by Techelles observation of Tamburlaine's awesome hue,

> As princely lions when they rouse themselves,
> Stretching their paws, and threatening herds of beasts:
> So in his armour looketh Tamburlaine:
> Methinks I see kings kneeling at his feet,
> And he with frowning brows and fiery looks.
> (I.ii.52-56)

it is not necessarily surprised to hear Techelles self-conscious and somewhat stilted question to Tamburlaine.

But, to say the least, Techelles is not only most surprised but he is also taken aback at Tamburlaine's confession of love: "What now?" In love?" (I.iii.106); and also it spots the equally self-conscious answer Tamburlaine gives him back: "Techelles, women must be flattered"; thus he defends himself (I.ii.107). We may also notice his begrudging hint of repudiation of his own weakness in praising Zenocrate when he refers to his feelings:

> But how unseemly it is for my sex,
> My discipline of arms and chivalry,
> My nature and terror of my name,
> To harbour thoughts effeminate and faint.
> (V.ii.111-14)

Not to be singled out among warriors, he hastens to include all men as needing, as much as he does, love:

> And every warrior that is rapt with love,
> Of fame, of valour, and of victory
> Must need have beauty beat on his conceits.
> (V.ii.117-19)

Here and elsewhere Tamburlaine displays ambivalent personality traits. Finally he achieves compromise within an uncompromising nature. He is able to love within an unfeeling demeanor the masses he conquers (the "character within a character" I spoke of earlier). So although

Tamburlaine is capable of the most delicately exquisite and tender feelings, he tends to kick the dirt with his toe when they are brought to his attention. And he argues that without love there could be no heroes--gentle love is necessary to and inseparable from violent slaughter. So, while Tamburlaine is quite willing and able to deal with the sublime he is not quite ready to admit to any weakness. It is precisely this kaleidoscopic shifting of tone, imagery, and characterization which carries the willing reader along and holds his interest.

The underlying theme of the story, then, remains man's ability to conquer himself. In this respect, the play may well relfect unresolved paradoxes and frustrations within Marlowe. Indeed, there are those who go so far as to spell out this idea without reservation. E. M. Fermor states that "in all but Edward II . . . Marlowe's dramas are . . . a series of scenes held together by the poetic energy of his own dominating personality." "He is his own hero," says Fermor (O'Neil 21), though Fermor hasn't recognized the importance paradox plays in characterizing and defining Marlowe's personality as it is projected into his plays.

While there is virtue in the words of this critic, I am not prepared to envision Marlowe as "sanguinary" nor do I believe that a "dominating personality" alone created this poetic masterpiece. If it did, Marlowe's life experiences would make as good reading as his plays, which is hardly the case. (A very short and rather hidden life makes no copy to speak of at all.) Moreover, there is a "tongue-in-cheek" quality in a goodly number of these scenes which suggests a self-conscious distance between the artist and his character.

Tamburlaine surely has "tongue-in-cheek" when he plays the grim joke on Cosroe. Tamburlaine assures Cosroe that the throne of his brother, King Mycetes will be delivered to him and sends him off to Persepolis for a sure shot victory. A smugly classical tongue-in-cheek play, Cosroe finds no victory but his death warrant ahead. True Tamburlaine did try to stop the tragic ending; but he failed to do so. Cosroe goes off in great spirits:

> And now Lord Tamburlaine, my brother's camp
> I leave to thee, and to Theridamas,
> To follow me to fair Persepolis.
>
> (II.v.38-40)

And he tells how "I long to sit on my brother's throne"

(II.v.47). Menaphone assures Cosroe, "Your majesty shall shortly have your wish, / And ride in triumph through Persepolis" (II.v.48-49). And cunning Tamburlaine, tickled with his own fun chicanery, makes the classic tongue-in-cheek comment:

> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
> Is it not brave to be a king, Techelles?
> Usumcasane and Theridamas,
> Is it not passing brave to be a king,
> And ride in triumph through Persepolis?
> (II.v.50-54)

And this tongue-in-cheek remark, so packed with subtle and cogent meaning, renders Tamburlaine's subjects almost speechless; their answers stagger around the point and seem almost disconnected. When Zenocrate pleads for her captured father, the Soldan of Egyptia, Tamburlaine recounts his richest spoils and asks her, "And wouldst thou have me buy thy father's love / With such a loss? Tell me Zenocrate" (IV.iv.81-82). And this is a prime example of a loving and generous tongue-in-cheek remark, for, of course, Tamburlaine means to protect Zenocrate and her father and to restore their country and all their worldly goods to them and besides add untold riches of his own. A nastier example of Tamburlaine's many tongue-in-cheek remarks to his captured

Emperor Bajazeth: "--Feed, you slave, thou may'st think thyself happy to be fed / from my trencher" (IV.iv.90-91). "Here Turk wilt thou have a clean trencher?" (IV.iv.99). Bajazeth answers in his usual beligerent manner: "Ay tyrant, and more meat," and receives a boxing from another of Tamburlaine's mean jokes: "Soft sir, you must be dieted, too much eating will make you surfeit" (IV.iv.100-101).

Ingram believes that "Tamburlaine was written in the freshness of youth; Marlowe not only gives untrammeled scope to his imagination, but bares his very innermost mind to our gaze, dauntlessly proclaiming by the mouths of his dramatic puppets his own opinions" (Ingram in Battenhouse 2). But the author is more than a youthful genius "smarting off." Granted, Marlowe is very young, but the tongue-in-cheek tone in places implies that Tamburlaine is <u>not</u> a spokesperson for Marlowe's conscious opinions but rather an expression of a deeper, probably unconscious conflict that Marlowe might well have failed to have recognized as part of his true personality. The very popularity of the play proves that it acts upon the majority of people as a fulfilling experience. The blood-soaking exhibition of Tamburlaine's blasphemy is

elevated in the reader's perception of it by the vantage of its paradoxical association with virtue. The reader succumbs to the play, not because of the protagonist's might; but he succumbs because he listens to the thundering Tamburlaine and believes him and--at some deep level--identifies with him; the reader's sins become his. A prime example of this lies in the trial of Bajazeth, Emperor of Turkey--a man who matches Tamburlaine in the depth of his depravity, but not in determination and strength. Conquered by Tamburlaine and caged with his wife, Queen Zabina, he is tortured by Tamburlaine in a savagely playful way. His ego collapses as does his faith in his god, Mahomet, whom both he and his wife damn. Bajazeth moans:

> Ah villains, dare ye touch my sacred arms?
> O Mahomet, O sleepy Mahomet!
>
> (III.iii.268-69)

Then Zabina:

> O cursed Mahomet, that maketh us thus
> The slaves to Scythians rude and barbarous!
>
> (III.iii.270-71)

Hopeless and without faith, they both brain themselves. Consciously we may tend to blame Tamburlaine for their deaths, but subconsciously we realize the blame lies

directly with themselves and their weakness. Bajazeth as a dictator and Zabina as a ruling queen allow themselves self-pity and self-indulgence. But mainly, Bajazeth comes a cropper because he loses faith in his own divine being, Mahomet, as well as his own soul, and Zabina follows suit. Tamburlaine doesn't destroy Bajazeth and Zabina; they literally destroy themselves--before their suicide--paradoxically through a loss of belief in the goodness of their God. This is everyman's struggle with his soul. Tamburlaine is only a contributor of small account in the death of the Emperor and his queen whose lack of containment, self-will and cupidity do them in. Paradoxically, Tamburlaine has won nothing worth winning and Bajazeth has lost everything by losing his own soul. Once again we see a "higher providence . . . overruling man's ambition and folly" (Battenhouse, Preface 2.xiii) and the basic paradigm provided in the paradox.

Blinded by his vision of immortality, ironically, Tamburlaine is unable to view the real mortality he faces. Indeed, paradoxically, his insatiable lust for conquest and power--the ability to conquer all without fail--consumes the sources of his energy. The direct results of these demonic

flames decimate and weaken him. He is catapulted toward the very mortality he fights to deny. At the same time, while he is incapable of morally justifying his triumphs, he attempts to rationalize the virtue of them all the same. The end result is a rapidly wanning strength which brings him to the final reality of his own mortality and death. In short, he is consumed by his own "meteoric" fire, and acts in total "disregard of divine grace" (Battenhouse, Preface 2.xii).

In this respect, at least, we can see that Marlowe's short life is similar to Tamburlaine's. Marlowe's troubled life may be spilling over into the protagonist's character and may well signal a deeper, more profound similarity in personality types--i.e, the unresolved conflicts I spoke of earlier. Again, paradoxically, Tamburlaine's only failure--death--also proves to be, in the final analysis, his greatest victory. This serves as Tamburlaine's true triumph for it puts to rest his lifetime of agonizing over the conflicting demands of love and worldly goods. The invincible conqueror must step down to the irrevokable conqueror, death. Tamburlaine even challenges Mahomet for his almighty

power when he overthrows Babylon. Acting as "God's Scourge" he burns the Koran and

> Heaps of superstitious books,
> Found in the temples of Mahomet,
> Whom I have thought god? They shall be burnt.
> (II.V.i.172-74)

At this time Tamburlaine dares God out of heaven:

> Now Mahomet, if thou have any power,
> Come down thyself and work a miracle,
> Thou are not worthy to be worhipped.
> (II.V.i.185-87)

Tamburlaine shows us exactly how god-like he is when he attempts to "scourge" Babylon; he finds all guilty and no one person innocent; therefore, he orders Techelles:

> . . . drown them all, man, woman, and child,
> Leave not a Babylonian in the town.
> (II.V.i.68-69)

Here is wrath truly worthy of a god.

Ironically Tamburlaine discovers that after a lifetime of conquering he is, in fact, the conquered. His many victories lie dormant and useless at his powerless side. Like everyman, Tamburlaine rails and struggles mightily with this final disaster and against life's frustrations and despair. Once more he must prove himself invincible.

> What daring god torments my body thus
> And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?
> Shall sickness prove me now to be a man,
> That have been termed the terror of the world?
> . . . . . .
> Come carry me to war against the gods,
> That thus envy the health of Tamburlaine.
> (II.V.iii.42-45, 52-53)

And as death stands by his side awaiting to carry Tamburlaine away he continues:

"In spite of death I will go show my face" (II.V.iii.114).

And he assures his sons Celebinus and Amyras:

> And shall I die and this unconquered?
> Lo here my sons, are all the golden mines,
> Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
> More worth than Asia, and the world beside.
> (II.V.iii.150-53)

Until Tamburlaine finally accepts the inevitable conqueror, death, he fights his usual battle; but when finally defeated, he rises above defeat in his great humility and acceptance. And in doing so he takes us from the profane to the sublime. In one justification of accepting death Tamburlaine envisions himself living on in his sons. He bids Amyras: "So, reign my sons, scourge and control these slaves" (II.V.iii.228). In Tamburlaine's death the "monstrosity" which is inherently part of who he is has gone where it won't frighten anyone anymore, not even

the audience whom I must believe feels relieved to see him perish.

Perhaps Marlowe's youthful divinity training pulled against his inherently forceful and ambitious nature and perhaps he chose Tamburlaine to live out for us the paradoxical conflicts within himself. Tamburlaine finds that while in his invincible god-like position, although he succeeds in conquering the world, paradoxically, he still remains as mortal as any living man. Tamburlaine also suffers the whips of the mortal; specifically when his beloved Zenocrate leaves him in death. This blow proves almost more than Tamburlaine can bear. She is the one thing he loves above all, including his own person. And within this great devotion we find a man with a beautiful and sublime love. One critic tells us that Tamburlaine doesn't appreciate real beauty, that it's like an emblem or logo to him, so to speak, something to identify with his own prowess; I find that position hard to accept. T. M. Pearce argues doubtfully, and somewhat sarcastically that: "for Tamburlaine's love for beauty [he] finds it a 'non-moral beauty, of fame, of valour, and of victory'" (Battenhouse 5).

We have already heard Tamburlaine confess his weakness for Zenocrate's exquisite beauty which includes her purity and which he promises her father, the Soldan, to keep inviolate and pure:

> Her state and person wants no pomp you see,
> And for all blot of foul inchastity,
> I record heaven, her heavenly self is clear:
> Then let me find no further time to grace
> Her princely temples with the Persian crown.
> (V.ii.421-25)

Also, we must look at his loving attitude toward his associates and his fine feelings for them. He asserts that no fortune however large could replace his "meanest soldier."

> Not all the gold in India's wealthy arms,
> Shall buy the meanest soldier in my train.
> (I.ii.85-86)

But we also must look more carefully into Tamburlaine's activities and the ethics he uses to adjudicate, in order to find the real man behind the mask. Tamburlaine's men had a remarkable respect for their leader and one that strangely evolved from love, not fear, probably because Tamburlaine displayed a loving and trusting loyalty to those he selected.

A good example of Tamburlaine's kind of ethic showed up

on his interaction with Theridamas:

> Theridamas my friend, take here my hand.
> Which is as much as if I swore by heaven,
> And called the gods to witness my vow,
> Thus shall my heart be still combined with thine,
> Until our bodies turn to elements:
> And both our souls aspire celestial thrones.
> (I.ii.232-37)

So we must acknowledge this ying side of Tamburlaine as well as the yang for his psyche is as poetically delicate and beautifully oriented as it is basely savage, reveling in foe debasements. Like most revolutionaries who end up dictators, Tamburlaine falls heir to the very problems he essays to cure. Power and riches are heady wines, and those who hold them may succumb to their fumes. However, we have to remember that Tamburlaine has repudiated mere "riches" as his goal, claiming power as his end. Perhaps this could soften or lessen our judgment of him, if only because of his altruistic interest in the common man. However, he consistently knocks down any feelings we develop for him as we find him behaving in a brutally unacceptable and overbearing manner--most of the time the extent of which is nearly beyond belief. Still, we tend not to be overwhelmed by his cruel acts, probably because they are designed more to

underscore Tamburlaine's implacable will and accomplishments rather than to portray any unredeemable outrages. We do not view the blood-curdling actions; we only hear them second-hand. We thus are spared the immediate emotional reactions. We see a tableau. While the scenes are interesting, frightening, sensational and sadistic, they are also life-less. So, paradoxically, Tamburlaine's guilt, if any, weighs less heavily on our minds. Tamburlaine's brutal and cruel reactions to his captives are designed to encompass and represent

> . . . the flesh of Tamburlaine,
> Wherein an incorporeal spirit moves,
> Made of the mould whereof thyself consists,
> Which makes me valiant, proud, ambitious,
> Ready to levy powers against thy throne,
> That I might move the turning spheres of heaven,
> For earth and all this airy region.
> (II.IV.i.111-17)

This represents Tamburlaine's claim that "his spirit itself is part of the nature of God." (Una M. Ellis-Fermor in Irving Ribner, ed. 140). However, we are influenced more by Theridamas view <u>supra</u> than any acts Tamburlaine may be said to perform, and in which Theridamas also described Tamburlaine as:

> A Scythian shepherd, so embellished
> With nature's pride, and richest furniture,
> His looks do menace heaven and dare the gods,
> . . . . . .
> Or meant to pierce Avernus' darksome vaults,
> To pull the triple-headed dog from hell.
> (I.ii.155-57, 160-61)

Tamburlaine, in this way, somehow seems to grow in stature before our very eyes. His extraordinary traits, whether soft or hard, balance each other. They push and pull the viewer's emotions, appealing to the best and worst elements in all of us.

When Tamburlaine asks Zenocrate if she is "betrothed" she quickly answers, "I am my lord, for so you do import." (I.ii.33). Tamburlaine, as rapidly, tells her, "I am a lord, for so my deeds shall prove" (I.ii.34). And he drops his Scythian garments hiding his armour. We are electrified by the enormous splendor of this tall, muscular warrior in his beaten gold garments and accouterments of war:

> Lie here ye weeds that I disdain to wear,
> This complete armour and this curtle-axe
> Are adjuncts more beseeming Tamburlaine.
> (I.ii.41-43)

Again, we hear the simple heart of a Scythian shepherd speaking pridefully to Zenocrate. Shepherds don't ordinarily challenge anyone, let alone the whole world and

its united kings along with the most beautiful daughter of them all. And this Tamburlaine, so apparently raw and bombastic, we now find paradoxically also displays a quiet soul with a flutish tongue whose words play notes of celestial songs, words which paint pictures of beauty beyond description. When Tamburlaine poses the question to Zenocrate: "Disdain Zenocrate to live with me?" (I.ii.82), not a women's heart fails to leap with his tender appeal. Furthermore, Tamburlaine hails Zenocrate's beauty in an irrestible manner:

> Zenocrate, the loveliest maid alive,
> Fairer than rocks of pearl and precious stone,
> The only paragon of Tamburlaine,
> Whose eyes are brighter than the lamps of heaven
> And speech more pleasant than sweet harmony.
> (III.iii.117-21)

Even though Tamburlaine's love for Zenocrate remains overpowering, again, the illusion reigns as no active expression escapes Tamburlaine. It's as if they don't ever really touch. Zenocrate, however, comes close to convincing us of some kind of reality in their relationship when she becomes upset by the suicides of Bajazeth and Zabina:

> Ah Tamburlaine, my love, sweet Tamburlaine,
> That fights for scepters and for slippery crowns,
> . . . . . .

> Behold the Turk and his great Empress.
> . . . . . .
> . . . . Ah, mighty Jove and holy Mahomet,
> Pardon my love, O pardon his contempt.
> (V.ii.291-93, 299-300)

And later on, we note her thanks to Tamburlaine for sparing her father, the Soldan:

> O sight thrice welcome to my joyful soul,
> To see the king my father issue safe,
> From dangerous battle of my conquering love.
> (V.ii.376-78)

These words do not carry action but tell us something different about Tamburlaine, that he is capable of tenderness, of compromise within an uncompromising nature. Also we find that he has great pride in his lowly birth--all this from the "terror of the world"!

Although these scenes invite us to sympathize with both Tamburlaine and Zenocrate and enable us to get closer to a sense of their reality, we still don't receive a full-scale impression of the violent actions. Neither are we convinced of Tamburlaine's revelations protesting his own moral ability: "That virtue solely is the aim of glory, / And fashions men with true nobility" (V.ii.126-27) seems to be his creed, and despite his horrendous behavior which seems to contradict these words, he undoubtedly believes them

himself. Tamburlaine is acutely aware of the fact that he had risen from the level of the lowliest shepherd and he assures others of their ability to also rise as he bestows titles on his lieutenants:

> Deserve these titles I endow you with
> By valour and by magnanimity,
> Your births shall be no blemish to your fame,
> For virtue is the fount whence honor springs,
> And they are worthy she investeth kings.
> (IV.iv.122-26)

Tamburlaine honors these men; he knows and trusts them, and we don't even find any internal spies among them in his camp, checking them out. This speaks well for a part of Tamburlaine that T. M. Pearce (Battenhouse 5), denies when Tamburlaine argues with himself over his ambivalence between love and honour and which one should take precedence; he finds them indivisible, and he is pulled equally by both of them. Surely if Tamburlaine were not able to appreciate love, this would not be so important an issue in his life. And, as we have seen both love and honour prove to be of major importance in his life; the way in which Tamburlaine interprets them, however, may be arguable. In the first place, Tamburlaine provides us with every imaginable kind of emotion and a myriad kinds of beauty. The author's diction

and rhetoric alone are a symphony of musical sounds that titilate the soul and heart, to say nothing of Tamburlaine's gentle passions for Zenocrate which are nothing less than breathtaking. The author manages to touch us at the very core, here; presumably, the paradoxical nature of Tamburlaine is reflected by our own, innermost conflicts. Otherwise, I don't believe we would be at all interested in reading Tamburlaine. Marlowe's technique is reminiscent of that found in Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene. I see a remarkable similarity in the two authors' use of images, both authors employing illusion and allegory which tend to steal from the action to create a tableau effect. The seemingly massive tableaux sweep before our eyes, one after the other gracefully and rythmically. Tamburlaine, like The Faerie Queene, verbally create these still pictures with diction in place of action as bloodless battles conquer bloody legions of unseen men: "We have their crowns, their bodies strew the fields" (III.iii.215). There is no action, just a powerul voice describing massive action. In The Faerie Queen a lack of action verbs in the text causes the still-life effect; even in the most exciting scenes, while

the text paints flowing descriptions with a marvelously melodic rhythm of rhetoric; there is often no apparent movement. The audience, then, mentally supplies the action in the text of both Spenser and Marlowe. We do not have to become artists to see these colors nor musicians to feel the beat, but it's interesting to know why these stong elements almost overtake us.

The protagonist in Tamburlaine tells the world about his invincible powers which he declares are supported by the ruling forces of heaven, both by a Christian god and also by pagan gods of yore.

> The world will strive with hosts of men-at-arms
> To swarm unto the ensign I support.
> The host of Xerxes, which by fame is said
> To drink the mighty Parthian Araris,
> Was but a handful to that we will have.
> Our quivering lances shaking in the air,
> And bullets like Jove's dreadful thunderbolts,
> Enrolled in flames and fiery smoldering mists,
> Shall threat the gods more than Cyclopian wars.
> (II.iii.13-31)

So, never mind the anachronism of the non-existent bullets; it works given the poetic license. Battenhouse also points out Marlowe's imitation of Spenser's Alexandrine line which he has inserted into his blank verse:

> The Faerie Queene:
> Like to an almond tree ymounted hye
> On top of greene Selinis all alone,
> With blossoms brave bedecked daintily.
> (1.7.32)
> Tamburlaine:
> Like to an almond tree ymounted high,
> Upon the lofty and celestial mount
> Of ever-green Selinus, quaintly decked.
> (II.IV.iii.119-21)

Again, Battenhouse compares Una's lament in The Faerie Queene with Bajazeth's speeches of lament at his overthrow by Tamburlaine.

> Tamburlaine:
> O dreary Engines of my loathed sight,
> . . . . . .
> . . . why feed ye still on days accursed beams.
> (V.ii.195, 198)

And

> The Faerie Queene:
> Ye dreary instruments of doleful sight,
> Why doe ye longer feed on loathed light.
> (1.7.22)

There are many more remarkable likenesses between the two works. (Battenhouse (179) points out that Marlowe seems to have lifted a whole passage from The faerie Queene (VII.32):

> Like to an almond tree ymounted high,
> Upon the lofty and celestial mount
> Of ever-green Selinus, qaintly decked

> With blooms more white than Erycina's brows,
> Whose tender blossoms tremble every one,
> At every little breath that thorough heaven is blown:
> (Tamburlaine.II.IV.iii.119-24, Footnote 156)

It is truly strange that two such different works should carry such a similarity to the point where one irresistibly feels the parallels. Even the moral philosophy seems to be sympatico. One might wonder how much these two men were really alike in personality. And yet the vast differences between the works are evident. Marlowe's characters are generally thought of as dramatic and supposedly realistic personalities while Spenser's are "allegorical figures, types rather than personalities" (Battenhouse 192). But strangely enough, I have long had the impression that Marlowe's characters are types rather than personalities and the feeling that Spenser's allegory is highly dramatic. J. A. Symonds complains that there is a "carelessness of fine distinctions and of delicate gradations in Marlowe's sculptured colossi; 'His characters are not so much human beings, with the complexity of human attributes combined in living personality, as types of humanity'" (Battenhouse 192).

Symond's comment firms up my own feelings about

Tamburlaine's characters. Also, there is an invading sense of certainty that Marlowe was a dedicated reader of Spenser as pointed out by several other critics who have commented on the large number of Alexanderine lines interspersed in Tamburlaine and their similar techniques of allegory. Symonds rather spells it out for Battenhouse who surmises that "Marlowe is following in Spenser's traditions of moral allegory, but using the drama rather than the epic as the carrier of moral philosophy" (Battenhouse 192).

In both of these authors we hear a constant background beat and a certain musical tone brought into it by the diction. It tends to keep us mentally walzing along--like the person on the dance floor; we stay hypnotically glued to the play as the dancer stays hypnotically glued to the music. A very good example of this technique is found in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman where a seemingly far-off tune continues throughout the play, and indeed plays a major part in seducing the audience with its insistent repetition.

Marlowe thus uses tone and sound amply along with an on-going verbal barrage of pictorial structures which are

interspersed with "soaring flights of [lyric] poetry" (xxviii). He manages, despite the holes in his technique, to electrify his audience with paradoxical, unexpected scene changes accomplished through tone and diction. These accomplishments distract the audience from questioning what has just happened in an incomplete scene; in this way his audience is transported from one to the next noisy and colorful upheaval. Oversimplified, this might resemble the shell and pea game where we busy ourselves trying to find the hidden pea. Marlowe manipulated his words, sounds and images so we end up finding something entirely different from what we had imagined; and this is part of his technique of paradox. His soaring language, the profane and sublime rhetoric, is inherently paradoxical in causing a tableau effect, which is simultaneously static and active as we are pushed along by its powerful diction. Thus Marlowe's style at its deepest level reinforces the paradoxical nature of his hero. This rhetoric tends to push and pull our emotions back and forth much as Tamburlaine's ambivalent personality pushes and pulls us.

A simple Scythian shepherd, Tamburlaine aspires to hold

the crown of all kingdoms. He challenges the world in the name of freedom for the lowly and oppressed man. While transported from his simple world into a world of evil and devious sophistication, the shepherd, Tamburlaine, retains his basic, simple honesty and the heart of a lowly peasant as he rages on to conquer the world and master the hemispheres. In this lies the absolute difference between himself and the kings born to their monarchies. Tamburlaine is a man so entirely complex and willful as to confuse and bewilder us as he does his adversaries. Meander describes Tamburlaine most acutely:

> Some powers divine, or else infernal, mixed
> Their angry seeds at his conception:
> For he was never sprung of human race,
> Since with the spirit of his fearful pride,
> He dares to doubtlessly resolve of rule,
> And by profession be ambitious.
>
> (II.vi.9-14)

Tamburlaine's physical Herculean power, along with a Machiavellian wit, willful purpose and barbarous intent, is "Of stature tall, and straightly fashioned, / "Like his desire, lift upwards and divine" (II.i.7-8). He does not attempt to conquer the world alone. He brings along with him loyal and devoted followers to back his "ireful" desire

for "The perfect bliss and sole felicity, / The sweet fruition of an earthly crown" (II.vii.28-29). This desire for power motivates Tamburlaine, drives him on to conquer. The crown naturally is important as a symbol of this desire for power. Even though it's considered a cause of "bathos" by many critics, it is a constantly evident accouterment throughout the play, and Tamburlaine seems to count on its symbolism.

I suppose the most humorous tableau concerning the crown is demonstrated in the somewhat sadistic tormenting by Tamburlaine in his game playing with the simple-witted King Mycetes. Mycetes provides us a startling contrast with Tamburlaine, and one which Tamburlaine can play off of when Mycetes attempts to hide his crown in a hole. When Mycetes is observed by Tamburlaine who takes the crown from him, a childish game ensues and we get a view of Tamburlaine's boyish sense of fun:

> "Are you the witty King of Persia?"
> "Is this your crown?"
> "You will not sell it, will ye?
> "Come give it me," Mycetes cries.
> "I took it prisoner," objects Tamburlaine.
> "You lie, I gave it you."
> "Then 'tis mine."
>
> (II.iv.23, 27, 29, 31-34)

And so goes the amusing teasing until Tamburlaine, like a father with a small child, allows Mycetes to take the crown.

> Here take it for awhile, I lend it thee,
> 'Till I may see thee hemmed with armed men.
> (II.iv.37-38)

The game with Mycetes ends and the tickling exercises halt as Tamburlaine changes his mood; reverting to type he admonishes Mycetes: "Thou art no match for mighty Tamburlaine" (II.iv.40). Of course both the levity and the serious warning are lost on Mycetes who becomes nonplused by Tamburlaine's actions, and Mycetes "marvels much he stole it not away" (II.v.42).

Tamburlaine advises Amyras, his son, when preparing to attack the Turkish deputy:

> And sirrah, if you mean to wear a crown,
> When we shall meet the Turkish deputy
> And all his viceroys, snatch it from his head,
> And cleave his pericranion with thy sword.
> (II.I.iv.98-101)

After crowning his sons and Theridamas kings, Tamburlaine meets with Theridamas who addresses him as "Arch-Monarch of the world" and "offers" all his "power," "affection," "[himself]," along with "[his] crown," to lay at Tamburlaine's "kingly feet" (II.I.v.3-5). It's notable that

Theridamas offers the crown which was bestowed upon him by Tamburlaine because of the uncommon value Tamburlaine has placed upon the crown. It's as if Theridamas has literally offered his life's blood. Of course, this is form and a metaphor of devotion, and Tamburlaine, in due course, tells him ". . . Argier, receive thy crown again" (II.I.v.16). So, in effect, Theridamas gets a double whamie and is doubly graced by Tamburlaine. The same procedure takes place with Usumcasane and Techelles when they offer assistance in the same battle, as Tamburlaine also says, "Thanks, King of Morocco, take your crown again" (II.I.vi.10).

Again, the crown becomes a point of discussion after Tamburlaine has conquered Bajazeth and Zabina. Tamburlaine tells Zenocrate to take Zabina's Turkish crown and crown him "Emperor of Africa" (III.iii.221). Zabina, of course, violently objects, as she fights for her established rights as an Empress, and Tamburlaine insists on his rights as a conqueror to take over her territory and the crown. The crown seems to act as a fulcrum, the balance of authority, in these interchanges. The farcial incident discussed above with Mycetes and the crown is a relaxer, especially at this

time when too much violence might pall the audience. More importantly, it reveals another paradoxical aspect in the character of Tamburlaine as we discover that he possesses an endearing sense of humor. Tamburlaine means real business with his crowns and yet is able to laugh at them at the same time.

Tamburlaine's attitude toward the crown appears to be almost an obsession until we compare it with the attitude of other fictional rulers during Elizbethan times, especially Shakespeare's Richard II. Richard tells Northumberland:

> . . . Bad men, you violate
> A two fold marriage, 'twixt my crown and me,
> And then betwixt me and my married wife.
> (Richard II.V.i.71-73)

He tells his wife, "Our holy lives must win a new world's crown" (Richard II, V.i.24). In effect, without a crown he is without a world and has lost everything. As Richard surrenders to Bolingbroke he takes his crown in hand and says:

> Here, cousin, seize the crown.
> Here, cousin,
> On this side my hand, and on that side thine.

> Here cousin, now is this golden crown a deep well
> That owes two buckets filling one another,
> The emptier ever dancing in the air,
> The other, down, unseen, and full of water.
> That bucket down and full of tears am I,
> Drinking my griefs whilst you mount on high.
> (David Bevington, Richard ii.IV.i.182-90)

And he closes his complaint:

> My crown I am, but still my griefs are mine.
> You may my glories and my state depose,
> But not my griefs. Still am I king of those.
> (Richard II.IV.i.192-94)

So, we find, in the holy Christian Kingdom of England, God's lieutenant as guilty of the sin of ambition as is Tamburlaine; but not guilty for the same reason. Critics blame Tamburlaine's ambition on a "pagan lack of spirituality" which allows the base nature of Tamburlaine to supersede religiosity. This "ambition," the festering canker which poisons man's soul, is the backbone of the play and the play comes full circle as Tamburlaine's adoration of the crown spells out "ambition." It promulgates the evil forces which, as a result, transpire to devour and punish him and cause him, paradoxically, to wrestle with a self-balancing conscience. The critics try to prove Tamburlaine a "pagan" who loves only the material and lacks any spiritual love, i.e., love inspired by the Christian God.

These points have been argued by Pearce, supra, and other critical detractors. La Primaudaye contends that Tamburlaine knows only the " sweet fruition of an earthly crown," which shows a "blindness of the mind" evolving from a "never contented life" (Battenhouse 230). Pierre Charron says that "ambition is the strongest and most powerful passion . . . " (Battenhouse footnote, Of Wisdom, bk I. chap xx). And we can almost believe this argument when we see Tamburlaine restrain his passions for Zenocrate (as mentioned supra) if we can also believe that he had more compelling and more "ambitious" plans. Of course, this seems doubtful if we take into account Tamburlaine's modus operandi and his capacity for having everything his own way without such forced restraints. His restraints in dealing with Zenocrate involved what were clearly moral choices spiritually directed. And there are other instances to substantiate this sublime behavior on the part of the otherwise profane Tamburlaine which are not recognized by these critics. Even though many of the characteristics of ambition fit Tamburlaine quite exactly (e.g.: possession of a "lust for power," "worship of earthly beauty," "blood,"

"tongues of fire," and "crownes")--and admittedly they are neither Godly nor spiritual in any way--at the same time a gigantic contradition of these facts lies in the paradoxically kindly acts of this complex man. These contradictory acts contrarily display the highest kind of spirituality. We see this in Tamburlaine's gift of the Soldan's conquered kingdom back to Zenocrate and her father, the Soldan, along with untold riches they never had before. These were given despite the perfidity spewed out by the Soldan against Tamburlaine when he says that " [Tamburlaine] must be a devil since he is no man" (IV.i.42). And the Soldan refers to Tamburlaine as a villain "as monstrous as Gorgon, prince of Hell" (I.i.18). This is not to say that Tamburlaine did not deserve these harsh criticisms; he surely did, but these acts of generosity, compassion and love are not those acts of a cold, loveless and unspiritual conqueror. They are acts of highest Godly spirituality evolving from a mercifully loving and forgiving heart, and Tamburlaine should get credit for them.

The author Marlowe's presence somehow does feel close by here. But I do not necessarily feel that he is

deliberately reflecting on his own life. Ingram, on the contrary, thinks that Marlowe expresses his own personality: "Tamburlaine, the incarnation of audacious ambition, endowed with indomitable faith in himself, seems a personal portrayal of Marlowe's own idiosyncrasies." "Mental phases, not actions coinside with the young revolutionary's" and "[Tamburlaine] is his own hero" (Ingram 42). H. Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) seems to agree when he says that the "sanguinary Scythian utters the deepest secrets of the artist's heart . . . " (Ellis in O'Neil 21). Surely Marlowe may have been struggling with complex, deeply repressed ambitions beyond his own ability to consciously acknowledge. Those buried drives probably escaped his sub-conscious and may have spilled over into his writing. So Marlowe's pen scorches the paper and sublimely lights up the heavens as well. All the while it takes us to the dregs of hell and damnation--thus we are constrained to accept both sides of Tamburlaine, the obviously profane and paradox-ically sublime.

Chapter III

Tamburlaine Faces His First Challenge

In Part II of the play, Tamburlaine's arch enemy is death. Death appears in these later years and stays relentlessly by his side. Death strikes his first "blow" by taking Zenocrate away from Tamburlaine. Here we get a picture of the metal of Tamburlaine whose impotent rage against the grim reaper renders him nearly unbalanced. This is Tamburlaine's first defeat and one he cannot adjudicate; so he tries to deny it happened. "For she is dead? Thy words do pierce my soul: / Ah sweet Theridamas say no more" (II.II.iv.125-26). He begs on Zenocrate's deaf ear: "Live still my love and so conserve my life, / Or dying, be the author of my death: (II.II.iv.55-56). Further storming against all comers, he cries:

> What, is she dead? Techelles, draw thy sword,
> And wound the earth, that it may cleave in twain,
> And we descend into th' infernal vaults,
> To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair,
> And throw them in the triple moat of hell,
> For taking hence my fair Zenocrate.
>
> (II.II.iv.96-101)

And in further frustration in even jealous rage, he warns:

> What god soever holds thee in his arms,
> Giving thee nectar and ambrosia,
> Behold me here divine Zenocrate,
> Raving, impatient, desperate and mad,
> Breaking my steeled lance, with which I burst
> The rusty beams of Janus' temple doors,
> Letting out death and tyrannizing war,
> . . . . . .
> And if thou pitiest Tamburlaine the Great,
> Come down from heaven and live with me again!
> (II.II.iv.109-15, 117-18)

In these last five lines it sounds almost as if Tamburlaine means to break the barriers of death with his own life-giving, physical body so that Zenocrate may join him once again. And, once again, Tamburlaine seeks to control the heavens even though paradoxically, he seems to have nearly lost control of himself. Thus, we find him taking ambivalent swings from the role of the conqueror to that of the conquered.

Toward the end we find Tamburlaine in the extreme of his paradoxes, begging abjectly for Zenocrate's impossible return. He realizes, at the same time, that he is defeated and can't possibly win this one; so he pleads like a child for her to come down and live with him again. And this great man above pity begs for pity now! We hear the sob and feel the torrent of wet tears as they course down his cheeks.

We notice, however, that in this reduction of his power Tamburlaine has been careful to address himself as "Tamburlaine the Great" which I suppose he might feel modifies any weaknesses he cares to express. But he does express them all the same, which causes us too see quite another side--an emotionally needy one--of Tamburlaine, a side which he has voiciferously denied throughout the play. In this case we can almost see Zenocrate as a mother figure, and the interaction of these two characters underscores the irony of his inability to face the loss of her. There is no question of the oneness of these two figures--a oneness that greatly enlarges the figure of Tamburlaine and totally contradicts the picture of his independence. Theridamas seems always to be there to come to the rescue of Tamburlaine--once again, Tamburlaine's alter ego acts in his defense. He reminds the distraught Tamburlaine, "Ah good my lord be patient, she is dead" (II.II.iv.119), and he urges Tamburlaine to calm himself. But Tamburlaine is simply unable to face his first defeat and he begs Theridamas, "Though she be dead, yet let me think she lives" (II.II.iv.127). And here, we see the youthfulness in

Tamburlaine; paradoxically the conqueror turns into the "son" who has lost his mother. Tamburlaine's ability to go through life unscathed and to master all things gives way now to a kind of helplessness, almost like that of a youth who is incapable of facing the finality of death. But, this is no child's battle; it is in reality Tamburlaine's first round with everyone's final companion, death.

Eugene M. Waith says that the "dominant appeal" of the play is due to "wonder aroused by vast heroic potential," that "the very paradoxes of Tamburlaine's nature excite wonder, and this was supposed, in Marlowe's time to be the effect of paradox" (Waith in Leech 90). Of course this intercourse with death causes us great wonder. Not only is Zenocrate's death Tamburlaine's first defeat, but also his first wound--an almost mortal one, at that. But this assault is really a precursor to death's later visit to Tamburlaine himself. The battle has only begun and Tamburlaine will fight to the end to have things his way. As we know, he never fully surrenders but only gives up what he must on his own terms. He manages, in the final analysis, to make death his triumph. Tamburlaine comes as

close as he ever will to defeat with Zenocrate's death which is much harder for him to bear than his own. As Tamburlaine puts it, " . . . feed my mind that dies for want of her" (II.II.iv.128). In this we see that she is a great deal more than a beautiful lover to Tamburlaine. Zenocrate provides deep insights into Tamburlaine's character--his ability to love is a powerful aspect of his nature and not a weakness, despite his description of love as "effeminate." It prompts his to perform some remarkably humanitarian acts aa mentioned supra, and to "take truce with all the world" (V.ii.465). So, Zenocrate brings out the best in Tamburlaine but she does so without taking away either his strength or his control or his domination. We find Tamburlaine adamant in refusing several of her gentler pleas. For example, we can't forget the poor virgins and Tamburlaine's mindless execution of them because of his warped sense of "honour." It turns out, however, to be ritualistic and emblematic and thus removed somewhat from the audience which in turn softens the blow and revulsion we feel.

I will not spare these proud Egyptians,

> Nor change my martial observations
> For all the wealth of Gibon's golden waves,
> Or for the love of Venus, would she leave
> The angry god of arms and lie with me.
> (V.ii.58-62)

All the while Zenocrate grieves for them:

> Wretched Zenocrate, that livest to see
> Damascus' walls dyed with Egyptian blood,
> . . . . . .
> But most accursed, to see the sun-bright troop
> Of heavenly virgins and unspotted maids,
> . . . . . .
> Gazing upon the beauty of their looks:
> Oh Tamburlaine, wert thou the cause of this
> That term'st Zenocrate thy dearest love?
> (I.V.ii.255-56, 260-61, 170-72)

These and other pleas Zenocrate makes for Bajazeth and Zabina go unheeded. This is another aspect of the paradox inherent within Tamburlaine's ironical behavior, but it is understandable if Tamburlaine is to sustain his momentum and live up to his claims of being the "terror of the world." So what Zenocrate really does is act like a ship's rudder, keeping Tamburlaine on course and his ship from floundering in rough waters. She is a vital and necessary heroine as well as a good wife and loving mate. Although she remains somewhat removed from the actions of the play, she also worries--the very human trait she brings

to us renders her a bit more human than Tamburlaine. She is not just a "beauty" "beat[ing] its conceits on the warrior" (V.ii.118-119). In this, she is basic and enduring as is their love and partnership and she is therefore vital to the story line. Tamburlaine admits to her father, the Soldan of Egypt:

> Though my right hand have thus enthralled thee,
> Thy princely daughter here shall set thee free.
> (V.ii.371-72)

Furthermore, Tamburlaine has avowed that she has more power to move him than do his enemies. Waith says, "In several ways the power of love and beauty is subordinated to Tamburlaine's primary concerns," and he is "not as sure as is G.I. Duthie that the marriage of Tamburlaine and Zenocrate symbolizes the establishment of an ideal relationship between beauty and the warrior" (Waith in Leech 77-78). I'm not entirely certain about that idea either. But I am certain, contrary to Waith, that Tamburlaine's "primary concerns" are indivisible from love. His worldly aspirations and conquests merge into a common pattern with his conquest and love of Zenocrate. Paradoxically, these opposing conquests and desires have everything to do with

each other in that they both satisfy Tamburlaine's ultimate ambition.

If we can believe that beauty lies in the "eye of the beholder," we really don't know how beautiful Zenocrate really is, and by whose standards she is being judged. But I do know that Tamburlaine is smitten with love, the eyes of which see only beauty. Tamburlaine says, "This is she with whom I am in love" (I.ii.108). We all know what love does to us and as yet we cannot ever put our fingers on the exact cause of it in the first place. It is, however, beautiful in its own right, and in that sense Duthie could have a point. Tamburlaine is the classical example of a man under love's spell; since in some ways beauty and love are inseparable--unquestionably he finds Zenocrate beautiful, he says so in many ways. However, he also finds other equally important qualities in Zenocrate: her soft-spoken ways and gentle approaches which are opposites of the traits we associate with Tamburlaine and are those he most dearly admires in her. Ironically, they are those which he despises in himself and fears for in his sons. Zenocrate places Tamburlaine on the sphere of a half-god, nearly

worshipping him and, strangely, forgiving his savagery, despite the fact that it so much disturbs her.

> As looks the sun through Nilus flowing stream
> Or when the morning holds him in her arms,
> So looks my lordly love, fair Tamburlaine
> His talk much sweeter than the Muses' song.
> (III.ii.47-50)

We hear this major contrast throughout the play: the harsh cry of battle opposed to the lyrical voice of Zenocrate. And even though Tamburlaine's violent side predominates, we also have to recognize his exquisitely beautiful lyrics describing Zenocrate. Ironically, he loves as intensely and upliftingly as he hates--another of the profane and sublime paradoxes of Tamburlaine. Disturbed somewhat that his sons may resemble their delicate mother and fearing that they may inherit her gentle traits, he examines their portraits thus:

> Placed by her side, look on their mother's face.
> Methinks their looks are amorous,
> Not martial like the sons of Tamburlaine.
> . . . . . .
> Their hair as white a milk and soft as down,
> Which should be like the quills of porcupines,
> As black as jet, and hard as iron or steel,
> Bewrays they are too dainty for the wars.
> Their fingers made to quaver on a lute.
> (II.I.iv.20-22, 25-29)

There is a serious, in-depth interchange between Zenocrate and Tamburlaine that can't be ignored or dismissed as merely romantic, light-hearted exchange. Zenocrate is, in fact, the polar opposite of Tamburlaine and in their opposition they become one (as Jung would explain it) in that his anima lives in her and her animus in him. Zenocrate rounds out the "wonder" in Tamburlaine as she impresses onto his rough psyche the soft light of her being; the gentle ripples of a pool unite with the crashing breakers of the sea. Thereby Tamburlaine grows massively impressive before our eyes. I think the audience feels ready to face the demise of Tamburlaine when Zenocrate goes, if for no other reason than that he must follow and join with her in order to be whole again. In her loss, Tamburlaine has become more than a little vulnerable and at times even pitiful as we have seen in his supplication for Zenocrate's return to him. Paradoxically, however, the overpowering Tamburlaine never entirely goes away, even in death. We never really see him die; he isn't buried before our eyes and since I closed the book I have had a strong sense of his eternal presence. Nevertheless we learn

undeniably about the relentless determination of death for which there is no match. In short, Zenocrate is instrumental in developing some of the paradox essential to Tamburlaine's characterization throughout the play. Though Zenocrate is a pale heroine, her very lack of color draws a stark contrast against the flashing colors of Tamburlaine; and this is one of the ways Zenocrate's role is of major importance in the play.

Zenocrate's opposite nature from Tamburlaine's and her gentle ways with him become evident when Bajazeth and Zabina brain themselves. We notice how lovingly she takes exception to the cruelty of Tamburlaine.

> Ah Tamburlaine, my love, sweet Tamburlaine,
> That fights for sceptres and for slippery crowns,
> Behold the Turk and his great Empress.
> (V.ii.291-93)

Zenocrate hopes that Tamburlaine doesn't meet the same fate because of " . . . his contempt / Of earthly fortune, and respect of pity" (V.ii.300-01). But the answer is clear. Tamburlaine acts with "principle and conviction" (Howe 68).

> . . . my customs are as peremptory
> As wrathful planets, death, or destiny"
> (V.ii.64-65)

While Zenocrate is quiet and gentle, her words are strong and carry weight. They are presented with clear logic and convince the audience; Tamburlaine listens though he does not always agree. The very differences between these two characters are paradoxical insofar as the two characters play off each other with perfect harmony despite their radical antithesis. The one thing they have in common is that neither ever chastizes the other, and this makes them whole for it neither diminishes his power nor reduces her gentility. Even though they are world's apart in their philosophy of life, they repsect and love one another--again she remains an integral part of his personality. The paradoxical intermingling of their character traits is relected by Zenocrate's comments regarding her sons' looking more like her than their father. Zenocrate says that they have "their mothers looks," but "their conquering father's heart" (II.I.iv.35-36). Similarly, Tamburlaine critiques the sons' resemblance to Zenocrate as "dainty" and states that it

> Would make me think them bastards, not my sons,
> But that I know they issued from thy womb,
> That never looked on man but Tamburlaine.
>
> (II .I.iv.32-34)

Once again, Tamburlaine's faith in Zenocrate (perhaps a "feminine" trait in itself) is evident here. This love for his family is summed up in these words:

> Sit up and rest thee like a lovely Queen.
> So, now she sits in pomp and majesty:
> When these my sons, more precious to mine eyes
> Than all the wealty kingdoms I subdued,
> Placed by her side, look on their mother's face.
> (II.I.iv.16-20)

This portrait of a lovely family and a devoted father would seem incongruous within the framework of the constant violence in which they live. But this picture, nonetheless, keeps the story line viable and in balance, for without it the play would be topheavy with gore and all but unreadable.

The story of Tamburlaine might well have omitted any reference to women at all; but Marlowe has woven female characters into the tapestry of what is otherwise a masculine and bloody tale. The delicate and tender threads inure themselves into, through, under, over and out of the roughest territory. Paradoxically, the whole becomes great art depicting the ultimate compatibility of what one may ordinarily consider incompatible elements. Marlowe has accomplished this feat by including just the precise amount

of femininity in the play and in Tamburlaine's character to make the play and his personality believable. Of course, Zenocrate plays the major feminine part: while providing contrast to Tamburlaine, she also shows us a lyrical shepherd within him.

In the beautifully uplifing and adoring words of Tamburlaine to Zenocrate, Marlowe himself almost becomes visible. One can hear, for example, echoes of "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" in Tamburlaine's love-making to Zenocrate. I seem to hear words garnered from a more Elizabethan than Scythian tradition as Tamburlaine praises Zenocrate:

> What is beauty saith my sufferings then?
> If all the pens that ever poets held,
> Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
> And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
> Their minds, and muses on admired themes:
> If all the heavenly quintessence they still
> From their immortal flowers of poesy,
> Wherein as in a mirror we perceive
> The highest reaches of a human wit--
> If these had made one poem's period
> And all combined in beauty's worthiness,
> Yet should there hover in their restless heads,
> One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least,
> Which into words no virtue can digest.
>
> (V.ii.97-110)

Tamburlaine's experiences may well represent the

trials of everyman. But the convergence of differing literary genres and cultures which makes up the character of Tamburlaine prohibits our placing one kind of label on him or making any firm assessments of his motives. In this way, the power and paradox of Tamburlaine are compounded. We are left to wonder at and to cogitate on a number of possibilities regarding Tamburlaine's motives and feelings, each of which seems logical until we look at other equally logical, contradictory possibilities. This exercise in itself proves the play Tamburlaine the Great a paradox in its own right.

One of the critics refers to Zenocrate's "pagan earthly beauty" and compares her with Helen of Troy. However, insofar as the Elizabethans, for the most part, did not think of Helen as "'a good women' and hated her as a 'harlot'" (Battenhouse 166), this criticism hardly fits Zenocrate in my book. Other critics compare her with Aneas' Dido; Troilus' Cressida; and Spenser's Duressa--all on the basis of a so-called "inconstancy" in her character and because Zenocrate gave up her betrothed for Tamburlaine. Helen willfully ran off with Paris as did Cressida with Diomedes--both in an underhanded way. Cressida even kept

Troilus dangling with love letters while consorting with Diomedes. And Dido attempted selfishly to ruin Aneas' historical dedication. The comparisons of these individuals with Zenocrate are not valid as Zenocrate's broken engagement was very straight forward and thus morally and socially acceptable; and the devotion between Zenocrate and Tamburlaine was both constant and absolutely pure. The evolution of their love further impresses the audience with its sincerity as Zenocrate proves to be a modest, good woman and mother. This very proper, Elizabethan-type relationship between husband and wife presents, once again, another interesting paradox.

All of the women compared to Zenocrate by the critics mentioned above were double-crossers, selfish and greedy--quite unlike Zenocrate who, I think would be more accurately compared to Dante's Beatrice. Zenocrate may have been a "pagan" beauty, but, according to Tamburlaine, she is far from being a pagan "harlot"; in fact, she is just the opposite. The somewhat sophomoric, straight-laced treatment of Zenocrate by Marlowe as author and by Tamburlaine as lover when she is first abducted by Tamburlaine comes off as

an anachronism in view of the time and setting in which the action of the play takes place. After all, pillaging and rape then were par for the course in military actions, but our Machiavellian monster, Tamburlaine, explains to Zenocrate's father, the Soldan, much in the manner of a proper Boy Scout, how inviolate Zenocrate has been kept by him: "Thy princely daughter here shall set thee free, / She that hath calm'd the fury of my sword" (V.ii.372-73). The phallic implication of the final phrase is representative of, and quite in keeping with, the uplifting spiritual effects Zenocrate has had on Tamburlaine and the consequence of his sense of romantic restraints. Tamburlaine shows us, once again, another paradoxical element of his personality: he demonstrates a gentle demeanor and tendency toward the intellectual in suppressing his natural appetites of the flesh--not what one expects of a typical conquering, aggressive warrior.

In Tamburlaine's high-minded opinion of Zenocrate, i.e., his idealistic love of her, he actually places her above Helen of Troy when making comparisons after death:

> Now are those spheres where Cupid used to sit,
> Wounding the world with wonder and with love,

> Sadly supplied with pale and ghastly death:
> Whose darts do pierce the centre of my soul,
> Her sacred beauty hath enchanted heaven,
> And had she lived before the siege of Troy,
> Helen, whose beauty summoned Greece to arms,
> And drew a thousand ships to Tenedos,
> Had not been named in Homer's Iliads:
> Her name had been in every line he wrote;
> Or had those wanton poets, for whose birth
> Old Rome was proud, but gazed a while on her,
> Nor Lesbia, nor Corinna had been named,
> Zenocrate had been the argument
> Of every epigram or elegy.
>
> (II.II.iv.81-95)

As noted above, Helen was less than a virtuous, good woman and, in Tamburlaine's mind especially, not as representative of the ideal woman as was Zenocrate. But for Tamburlaine, Honour, Virtue and Pride win the laurels, not how many lives one may have destroyed in order to obtain public accolades. This goes to the very heart of Tamburlaine's philosophy and we see it even in the cruel acts he performs. These cruel acts are cruel only insofar as necessary for obtaining victorious results, and performed not for the sake of cruelty, per se, but for the sake of honour. They have to do with keeping one's word no matter what. They involve the question of will and the demonstration of super ego--all of which translates into a type of

righteousness, of being "true to oneself." Helen wanted to satisfy her desires and conquer her own territories, so fame places her in Tamburlaine's category of the superhumans--he also feels that beauty and elegance create for her an eternal memorial--but he adds that she would possibly not have been so touted had Homer known Zenocrate.

Throughout the play there lingers a sense of the unreal. This is explained in part by the supernatural incidents that transpire. But these incidents aside, Tamburlaine seems to rise, as Menaphone describes him, "Like his desire, lift[ed] upward and divine" (II.i.8). Tamburlaine aligns himself with the heavenly bodies and sees himself as a divine being--he seems to touch the heavens and encompass the world. He tells Theridamas: "And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere, / Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome" (II.ii.176-77). Above his soul's chariot, Theridamas described Tamburlaine as:

> . . . zenith clothed in windy air,
> And eagle's wings joined to her feathered breast,
> Fame hovereth, sounding of her golden trump.
> (II.III.iv.61-63)

Somehow the audience accepts Tamburlaine's indomitable will

as eventually do all of his adversaries--David lives again and Goliath is about to fall, and everyone seems satisfied that this can happen. It's as if nature and the physical body of man do not count for much with Tamburlaine. For example, Tamburlaine cuts himself demonstrating a war wound to his sons and feels nothing. He invites them:

> Come, boys, and with your fingers search my wound,
> And in my blood wash all your hands at once,
> While I sit smiling to behold the sight.
> (III.ii.126-28)

There is a strong implication here that Marlowe may be suggesting parallels with the paradoxes of Christ: "God/man, mortal/immortal, miracle worker/ yet vulnerable. The picture of the Christian's working his hands in Christ's blood is common-place in Renaissance iconography. We can find a probable allusion to the New Testament's account of Jesus's encounter with "doubting Thomas" after the Resurrection where Jesus tells Thomas to place his hand in His wound in His side. After Christ has risen from the dead, He shows His desciples <u>His</u> hands and His side and says, "Peace be unto you as <u>My Father</u> hath sent me, even so send I you." Thomas was convinced by these mortal wounds that the resurrected Christ was a living person and that Christ was

God. He replied to Jesus, "My Lord, my God" (John, 20:24-27).

Tamburlaine lives finally, in his mind where we find his real success. He seems intellectually to soar and hover above the physical savagery and bloody accouterments of war that we equate with him. He does so when he attempts to right all the wrongs of the world.

> What better precedent than mighty Jove?
> Nature that framed us of four elements,
> Warring within our breasts for regiment,
> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world:
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.
> (II.vii.17-27)

It is not surprising then that this conquering warrior sustains no wounds; he returns from all battles unscathed, unruffled, whole and as spotless and untouchable as Hamlet's ghost. What is more, he knows, even before the battle begins, like the Almighty, that he will win. This is surely a powerful paradox, for Tamburlaine is only a mortal, not a god. The secret seems to be implemented in his ability (like a soothsayer's), to make everyone believe his threats

prefigure inevitable events. As a result, his enemies run like the lemmings, blindly to their destruction. Another paradox lies in Tamburlaine's lack of awareness that his real power arises from his intellect, not his curtle axe, but from the power of his will and dedication of soul, his mind-set that hypnotizes the masses. He warns his son Calyphas about the wages of cowardice thus:

> Of all the provinces I have subdued
> Thou shalt not have a foot, unless thou bear
> A mind courageous and invincible.
> (II.I.iv.71-73)

But he goes on to add another prerequisite:

> For he shall wear the crown of Persia
> Whose head hath deepest scars, whose breast most wounds
> . . . . . .
> Must armed wade up to his chin in blood.
> (II.I.iv.74-75, 84)

Tamburlaine wears the crown; surely he has "a mind courageous and invincible;" but he does not bear the deepest scars, in fact, none at all that we have seen. Since his garments are always spotless one wonders whether he waded in any blood at all except in his own mind. And here we meet, head on, a fantasy where everything seems easily accepted as fact despite these discrepancies. And this, too is another

paradoxical aspect of Tamburlaine, for he is, most certainly the absolute conqueror.

Surely Tamburlaine's power does not lie with Jove who has little to do with aiding Tamburlaine, nor with any other diety he calls upon. These gods have as little to do with Tamburlaine's success as does Phoebus, the sun, with whom he equates his own power.

> The horse that guide the golden eye of heaven,
> Are not so honoured in their governor,
> As you, ye slaves, in mighty Tamburlaine.
> (II.IV.iii.7, 10-11)

But, we do buy this window-dressing, this illusion that the world of physical combat is important. We "Oh," and "Ah," over the horrors, the cold-blooded murders and torture. But all the while, at a deeper level in our subconscious, we know that Tamburlaine is really talking about something of transcendent importance, the survival of the common man--our survival; and we then tend to disregard the cruelty which is necessarily part of the monster we all find in ourselves (what Jung calls the Shadow side of the psyche)--one that we would do better to let out in our own like imagination. Because of this, we are not entirely repulsed by Tamburlaine, but, in fact, side with him in many

instances. Tamburlaine, to me, represents man's elevated spiritual abilities, his struggles with the impossible and his triumphs over them. During his lifetime everyman also must do the impossible, conquer his own dragons and win his victories--sometimes in the most mysterious ways. Man rises above himself time after time as does Tamburlaine. So, the profane and the sublime merge as we find we cannot have one without the other.

In addition to showing us his natural and supernatural attributes, Tamburlaine displays an energetic and searching mind. His intimate knowledge of the cosmos and the divinity with which we see him wrestle adds to the impression we have of the power of his mind. Tamburlaine sways all in his path, yet he lives more in his soul-searching intellect than in the physical field of battle. The conquest of Bajazeth, "dread Emperor of Afric," is a prime example of the power of Tamburlaine's mind-embracing will with its nearly divine power.

The very getting to it, the mastering of activities and the stating of dicta necessary to achieve the conquest are more important to Tamburlaine than the conquest itself.

> . . . from East to the furtherest West,
> Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.
> . . . . . .
> And by this means I'll win the world at last.
> (III.iii.246-47, 260)

Keep in mind that Tamburlaine initially is only a lowly shepherd with no background in royal diplomacy and culture, or advantages of any kind, as opposed to Bajazeth who has much worldly acclaim and heads legions of kings all at his command, all with vast armies at his disposal; on the face of it, Tamburlaine's chances look nil. We need gasp with wonder at his audacity in attempting an attack on Bajazeth "whose feet kings of Afric have kissed" (I.ii.65). Bajazeth's confidence and superior attitude arise from his apparently overmastering puissance. Consider the extent of his forces against Tamburlaine:

> Now shalt thou feel the force of Turkish arms,
> Which lately made all Europe quake for fear:
> I have of Turks, Arabians, Moors and Jews
> Enough to cover all Bithynia
> Let thousands die, their slaughtered carcasses
> Shall serve for walls and bulwarks to the rest:
> . . . . . .
> Thy soldiers' arms could not endure to strike
> So many blows as I have heads for thee.
> Thou knowest not, foolish-hardy Tamburlaine,
> What 'tis to meet one in the open field,
> That leave no ground for thee to march upon.
> (III.iii.134-39, 144-47)

A short exchange of words between Bajazeth and Tamburlaine shows the irresistible force posed agianst the immovable object:

> I tell thee villain, those that lead my horse,
> Have to their names titles of dignity,
> And dar'st thou bluntly call me Bajazeth.
> (III.iii.69-71)

Similarly:

> And know thou Turk, that those which lead my horse,
> Shall lead thee captive through Africa.
> And dar'st thou bluntly call me Tamburlaine.
> (III.iii.72-74)

In a rage at hearing such words from a lowly shepherd, Bajazeth makes threats for which we see him pay dearly:

> By Mahomet my kinsman's sepulcher,
> And by the holy Alcoran I swear,
> He shall be made a chaste and lustless eunuch,
> And in my sarell tend my concubines.
> (III.iii.75-78)

Again, we are pulled into sympathy with Tamburlaine, if for no other reason than because of Bajazeth's deadly threats. Seeing a David and Goliath syndrome, we tend to root for David.

Thus far, we have discussed Tamburlaine the lover of beauty and beautiful women, a hater of authority and incumbent kings, a cruel manipulator and a loyal friend; a

talker of great persuasion and a closed-mouthed sphinx when silence serves his specific aim, as with Cosroe, for example. We have also found Tamburlaine an astute tactician--a jestor with "valor," he claims. But in Tamburlaine's intercourse with the second conquered king Bajazeth, we run across the character of Tamburlaine seeming to spin entirely out of control, even judged by his own standards.

We do hear the noise of battle, the rattling of sabres; blood is flowing in our mind's vision, but the final battle seems to have been won before it began with the sheer power of one man's will and forceful purpose. A resolute, earth-moving rush--an adjunct of Herculean strength approaching near apotheosis--the battle itself an anti-climax. One can almost envision lances dropping from sheer fright of men at the sight of Tamburlaine and men made effete to the point of genuflection as they drop to their knees. Directly after this performance Bajazeth admits defeat when Tamburlaine asks, "Who is conqueror?" (III.iii.212). Bajazeth answers, "Thou, by fortune of this damned foil" (III.iii.213). It's as simple as that--a faulty foil. It's as if the air

suddenly escapes from a large balloon and a nothingness remains from a supposedly mountainous, world-shaking battle. The greatest and most powerful emperor in the world is reduced before our eyes to a wraith. But still I feel that the audience remains transfixed and seems to believe the whole nine yards! Broken foil, indeed! What is more, I am led to believe that the audience continues on reading in a state of anticipation, even suspense, waiting, looking and hoping to reach the final culmination, the climax to find the proven lessons they should learn from the experiences. They never come. There are no lessons. Rather we are treated to the ignoble torture of captured and caged prisoners. The nobility of Tamburlaine is, for the moment, debunked and another paradox exposed. And during this capture an incongruous conversation occurs in which Tamburlaine advises his kings; Argier, Morocco, and Fez:

> Your births shall be no blemish to your fame,
> For virtue is the fount whence honour springs,
> And they are worthy she investeth kings.
> (IV.iv.124-26)

Paradoxically this seems an opposing lesson, if any. Granted Tamburlaine's treatment of Bajazeth and his Empress is without virtue but the audience doesn't seem to "Boo"

Tamburlaine down. On the contrary, there is a tendency to recognize a major difference between these two powerful and savage leaders and although they are the same stripe, to side with Tamburlaine and even buy his idea of virtue, doing so seems prefereable to siding with Bajazeth's ideology. After all, we cannot forget how Bajazeth planned to render Tamburlaine manless should he conquer him. Nor can we forget the dark and terrifying threats he made to Tamburlaine--all aside from the fact that Tamburlaine is the more competent and able man. Bajazeth is a man of the deep dark nooks from the bowels of the earth where only hell and pain dwell. Bajazeth threatens thus:

> Let ugly Darkness with her rusty coach
> Engirt with tempests wrapped in pitchy clouds,
> Smother the earth with never-fading mists.
> (V.ii.230-32)

And when damning Tamburlaine he begs the darkness:

> Fiends look on me and thou dread god of hell,
> With Ebon sceptre strike this hateful earth,
> And make it swallow both of us at once!
> (IV.ii.27-29)

So, images of monsters and portraits of hellish darkness take second place to Tamburlaine's speeches full of heavenly images. Thus despite his murderous and sadistic performances, there seems a proclivity on the part of the audience

to feel more comfortable in the heavens where Tamburlaine takes us than in the hell Bajazeth invokes. There is always an arm around Tamburlaine even though it's hard to imagine anyone's placing even a finger on Bajazeth for fear, lest he

> . . . suck up poison from moorish fens,
> And pour it in [his enemy's] throat!
> (IV.ii.6-7)

This is another omen of the darkly gruesome images Bajazeth entertains us with, and one which we want to avoid altogether. Yet compared to Tamburlaine's, Bajazeth's position is weak. So we stomp hard on these crawly

> . . . noisome parbreak of the stygean snakes
> Which fills the nooks of hell with standing air,
> Infecting all the ghosts with cureless griefs.
> (V.ii.191-93)

and all else aligned with Bajazeth. As a result, while the torture Tamburlaine metes out to Bajazeth is not abideable, Tamburlaine, if not forgiven, is somehow allowed to get by with it. Strangely enough Tamburlaine doesn't really physically hurt either Bajazeth or Zabina, his queen. It's all a psychological onslaught, the kind that probably won the battle in the first place. Certainly it wasn't lost on the "fortune of a [faulty] foil" (III.iii.213). Despite the fact that Tamburlaine's outlandish torture of Bajazeth

is almost a black-comic relief, especially when he uses Bajazeth for a common footstool in order to approach his throne, this is no laughing matter for either participant. Bajazeth, recall, crouches, face down on the floor in outraged protest. Tamburlaine, on the other hand, not only harasses Bajazeth, but enacts a kind of symbolic victory in stepping on Bajazeth's back which represents a worldly conquest and the conquering of both the geographical territory of the world and its emperor. As Tamburlaine steps upon Bajazeth's back (a footstool) to reach his chair, he says:

> Now clear the triple region of the air,
> And let the majesty of heaven behold
> Their scourge and terror tread on emperors.
> Smile stars that reigned at my nativity:
> And dim the brightness of their neighbour lamps,
> Disdain to borrow light of Cynthia,
> For I the chiefest lamp of all the earth,
> First rising in the east with mild aspect,
> But fixed now in the meridian line,
> Will send up fire to your turning spheres,
> And cause the sun to borrow light of you.
> My sword struck fire from his coat of steel,
> Even in Bithynia, when I took this Turk:
> As when a fiery exhaltation
> Wrapped in the bowels of a freezing cloud,
> Fighting for passage, makes the welkin crack,
> And casts a flash of lightening to the earth.
> But ere I march to wealthy Persia,
> Or leave Damascus and the Egyptian field,

> As was the fame of Clymene's brain-sick son,
> That almost brent the axle-tree of heaven,
> So shall our swords our lances and our shot
> Fill all the air with fiery meteors.
> Then when the sky shall wax as red as blood,
> It shall be said, I made it red myself.
> (IV.ii.30-54)

So, once again, we find Marlowe reaching with the hand of Tamburlaine to the very heart of Heaven and trying to enfold in his hand the very hand of God. It's as if Marlowe, the author, through the teaching of his lessons in Divinity has learned to believe, somehow, that the power of God really does lie within man, and he uses Tamburlaine to show us the virtues of such a belief as well as its folly. We find another example of what looks to be an almost blasphemous savagery, but which also carries biblical overtones--an almost monstrous paradox. But if we read about David in the Bible, we can find a parallel where he says: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, / Till I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Luke 20:42-43). Once again Tamburlaine parallels the Almighty by usurping the Wrath that belongs to God. But these contrasting and opposing values (the human and the divine) bring a cohesive balance to the play which might otherwise topple of its own bloody overweight.

Though Marlowe's Tamburlaine manages to carry us to the heavens and then drop us to the depths of hell, he keeps us aware of the purgatory of life which we must work out of.

> What daring god torments my body thus
> And seeks to conquer mighty Tamburlaine?
> Shall sickness prove me now to be a man,
> That have been termed the terror of the world?
> Techelles and the rest, come take your swords,
> And threaten him whose hand afflicts my soul.
> Come let us march against the powers of heaven,
> . . . . . .
> Come carry me to war against the gods.
> (II.V.iii.42-48, 52)

Tamburlaine paradoxically becomes all things to all people. Again Marlowe gives us no really good reasons to deny him entirely.

Marlowe has so inured Tamburlaine with the mysticism of immortality and the supernatural that the audience tends to become entangled emotionally in his mind-set. This causes the abnormal to become the normal. The more deeply the audience reads into the play the less they may judge by conventional means what is transpiring. It is therefore possible to discount many atrocities of Tamburlaine. Instead of being justly outraged, the audience might, for example, simply wonder why he performs some morally

reprehensible acts and leaves the judgment of them to God. Theridamas says of Tamburlaine while describing him to Olympia:

> And thou shalt see a greater man than Mahomet
> . . . . . .
> Which measures the glorious frame of heaven,
> The name of mighty Tamburlaine is spread.
> (II.III.v.46, 65-66)

And hearing this, it shouldn't be surprising that Tamburlaine describes his own immortality thus:

> See where my slave, the ugly monster Death
> Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear,
> Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart,
> Who flies away at every glance I give,
> And when I look away, comes stealing on.
> (II.V.iii.67-71)

While we all know that Tamburlaine has already avowed that death can never overcome him, supra, we also already know as well as does Tamburlaine, that death has come this time to stay. Knowing Tamburlaine, however, the reader might not be surprised to meet him one day face to face, despite death's last visit, and find that death really is his "slave."

We also witness another of Tamburlaine's massive compromises with death when by lowering his tone and speaking with an unaccustomed reserve, he bids his son take over his realm and rule. With great pride and aplomb and

ferocious implacability he lays out his usual protocol as if to endow his sons with his own will to reign.

> So, reign my son, scourge and control these slaves,
> Guiding thy chariot with thy father's hand.
> As precious is the charge thou undertak'st
> As that which Clymene's brain-sick son did guide,
> When wandering Phoebe's ivory cheeks were scorched
> And all th earth like Aetna breathing fire:
> Be warned by him, then learn with awful eye
> To sway a throne as dangerous as his:
> For if thy body thrive not full of thoughts
> As pure and fiery as Phyteus' beams,
> The nature of these proud revelling jades
> Will take occasion by the slenderest hair,
> And draw thee piecemeal like hippolytus,
> Through rocks more steep and sharp than Caspian clifts.
> The nature of thy chariot will not bear
> A guide of lesser temper than myself,
> More than heaven's coach and pride of Phaeton,
> Farewell my boys, my dearest friends, farewell,
> My body feels, my soul doth weep to see
> Your sweet desires deprived my company,
> For Tamburlaine, the Scourge of God must die.
>
> (II.V.iii.228-48)

Once again, Tamburlaine's hopes are facts in his mind: his sons will continue his reign--after all, are they not his seed? But, there is only one Tamburlaine and as his son Celebinus says, sadly:

> Your pains do pierce our souls, no hope survives,
> For by your life we entertain our lives.
>
> (II.V.iii.166-67)

These ideas evolve because even though <u>Tamburlaine</u> is a play it has mythic elements. We learn through Tamburlaine,

our hero, both how and how not to behave as he, in his seemingly successful acts, loses out through his errors in the long run. And this is exactly the technique that myths use to sort out goodness, to find out who and what the real hero is. There are many lessons and revelations in the play that could clarify the differences between proper and improper social and/or spiritual behavior. And there are also many Jungian archetypes present as well as in the Fairy Tales. While this is neither wholly a "Myth" nor a "Fairy Tale" and the purpose of the play is not merely to develop a sense of the rights and wrongs of life, still, the play offers us the possibilities of discretion in making a choice. At the same time many critics pose widespread contradictions about what the purpose of the play really is, running the gamet of "filthy" to that of youthful immaturity. For instance, Ellis-Fermor sees ". . . Marlowe's Tamburlaine as a 'young man's vision'" (Ingram 45). If so, it's a "young" vision that most writers (at any age) might never exceed.

I have yet to find a critic who is able to make a positive and definitive identification of the personality or character of Tamburlaine. There are simply too many

characterizations, traits, faults and virtues involved in his person for any critic to reduce them to a single formula. Surely all the seven deadly sins are charged against Tamburlaine. Yet his character supports the many accolades bestowed upon him. What exactly makes the man tick, this man whose exploits and beliefs so radically contradict one another and still make sense at the same time? Why do we believe the unbelievable nature of Tamburlaine? How does one define a man who characterizes all men in their basic drives and desires? It occurs to me that we are not viewing the specific actions of an irreligious, blood-thirsty, ambitious savage who spills out compassion, tender love and gentleness; a conqueror who loses all in the end but gains his own soul; but that we view rather the whole of mankind itself with all its ramifications, good and evil. In Tamburlaine we read about everyman and encounter the highly enlarged evil as well as the good that encompasses all of us, for man is admittedly a sinner as well as a hero. Tamburlaine's friendship and loyalty are what all men ideally hope for in their fellow man. Love is paramount for us as it was for Tamburlaine

with Zenocrate. Yet life delivers savage blows, blood-thirsty and unfair repercussions like those Tamburlaine both delivers upon and receives from his world.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

In Tamburlaine we can find almost every struggle man confronts along with the compromises and expediency necessary to survive. And survival, which is man's thrust, sometimes causes violent actions as it does with Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine survives using a variety of means necessary to accomplish his feat; he seeks the nearness of Jove and aligns himself with the heavens. Paradoxically, he aligns himself with the devil insofar as his ways strike us a highly unholy in many instances. Mankind aligns himself with God and in many instances can easily be accused of having to take devilish ways to survive in any case. Pride, the master of the seven deadly sins, can take humanity over as it also seduced Tamburlaine. Tamburlaine expresses a great and generous ability to love his family and friends as does mankind; finally, man must leave his world, his victories and failures behind, as did Tamburlaine.

Masinton sees Tamburlaine as totally "corrupt," and "resembling Lucifer." Like Lucifer he "attempts to usurp divine prerogatives," and also "represents man's inborn

tendency to challenge authority . . . in defiance of moral law" (Charles G. Masinton 27). And this is true in part, for we see many examples of Tamburlaine's recalcitrance and his hell fire in burning of the city of Damascus. But where does it also say that Lucifer loved, cherished or was loyal to anyone? Where do we find his compromising to adjudicate and erase a tear from someone's eye? Still it's true as Masinton states that Tamburlaine suffers the loss of his "self-vision" of his "omnipotence and the eternally sublime;" in reality "[he] is a mortally isolated, damned soul who burns with the hopeless desire to recover [his] lost vision of bliss--. . ." (Masinton I.6). Nevertheless Tamburlaine manages to rise above these depths through his stubborn will and dream of omnipotence to keep things under his control, if only in his own mind. Even though Tamburlaine patterns himself after the diabolical, seeking like Lucifer to overthrow the gods, contrary to Lucifer, he sees himself rising heavenward to take his welcomed and proper place of authority with the gods. His sins are still his accomplishments and hell is no where in his view when he contemplates his place after death.

> In vain I strive and rail against those powers that
> Mean t'invest me in a higher throne,
> As much too high for this disdainful earth.
> (II.V.iii.120-22)

Hell is rarely mentioned in relation to Tamburlaine; it is alluded to only by implication in the references to his constant fires and his own internal feverishness upon his impending death. His physician warns him:

> Your veins are full of accidental heat,
> Whereby the moisture of your blood is dried.
> (II.V..iii.84-85)

Perhaps Tamburlaine carries his damnation within his soul, yet he mostly ignores hell. When he mentions it, it is only to damn it when Zenocrate dies, threatening to enter the bowels of the earth and "wound" it. He begs Techelles:

> . . . that it may cleave in twain,
> And we descend into th'infernal vaults,
> To hale the Fatal Sisters by the hair,
> And throw them in the triple moat of hell,
> For taking hence my fair Zenocrate.
> (II.II.iv.97-101)

At the same time Tamburlaine embodies a hell on earth with his fires, blood and death; in his own imagination he soars heavenward. Tamburlaine lives in a self-serving dream of his own creation and therefore is far-removed from the reality of life itself. The fact that he is able to convince

others of the truth of what he perceives and maintain his personal power shows him to be a man larger than life--a man whom the audience both hates and loves.

Once again, I suppose the only way to explain these contradictory and paradoxical attitudes is by not viewing Tamburlaine as a character at all, but as a symbol which proves simultaneously the morality and immorality of human life. If anything is proven, it is that there are no guarantees, even for those with a seat nearest to God. Proven is that if punishment comes, it comes from within the soul of man who is truly an island within himself and must deal alone with his problems as did Tamburlaine. Proven is that forgiveness counts as we forgive Tamburlaine time and time again, probably because of our own self-realization that his weaknesses are our own weaknesses. After all, who can place blame on a symbol? Above all, it's proven that humanity continues to attempt ambitious success, continues to err in many ways and although Tamburlaine appears to be all-powerful, even he needs a foot up time and again, knowing that death is the healer who lies in wait for him. Original sin places mankind in this position and redemption

awaits him. Tamburlaine seems to fit nicely into this concept.

According to Berringer, "The phenomenon of Tamburlaine cannot be grasped on theological terms alone; it leads us into new and fascinating speculations about the nature of 'transgressing'" (Berringer, Marlowe's Dr. Faustus and Tamburlaine I.37). But since the nature of "transgressing" and "theology" are not necessarily indivisible we are still therefore only faced with interacting elements throughout the play. It's difficult to talk about one without talking about the other. But, like Berringer, I think there are other terms of equal importance. Marlowe seems to give Tamburlaine a deeply philosophical view as well and engages the reader in attempting a philosophical reception. And he does so most successfully as we buy these conflicts and ironies and repetitive paradoxes no matter how revolted we may become with Tamburlaine's raunchy antics. The audience relates to and understands on a very deep level what Tamburlaine and Marlowe try to tell us.

Throughout the play there is one formal reference to Christianity when the Hungarian Christian, Sigismund, breaks

his word with the pagan Mahomet, Orcanes, to back his troups up against Tamburlaine. It seems that Christians don't have to keep a promise to a pagan. Baldwin assures Sigismund:

> No whit my lord: for with such infidels,
> In whom no faith nor true religion rests,
> We are not bound to those accomplishments.
> (II.II.i.33-35)

Here again we see a dastardly trick and immoral act performed in the name of Christianity, and we wonder what Marlowe may be trying to tell us about his religious beliefs and sense of justice. With Tamburlaine, the will of man abides. Blasphemy is heralded and pagan gods threatened by Tamburlaine whose power he tried to exceed. At the same time Tamburlaine is heard to utter almost biblical prayer-like orations. Surely we can only define his humility in his death in that manner. But no matter where we turn to make a definitive opinion about Tamburlaine we find an opposition that we can also prove. And in this we meet head on the great paradox of Christopher Marlowe's genius.

Certainly the play is tragic, but not in the sense of Greek tragedy with its Aristotelian catharsis, where man finally sees the error of his ways. Rather it is a series of tragedies where man triumphs at others' tragic expense.

Thus, the reader fails to experience any real sense of pathos. In short, Harry Levine was right when he wrote: " . . . the explorative character of Tamburlaine removes the play so much from the notion of tragedy which the Elizabethan stage had yet to entertain that we are able to take Marlowe's tragic intention more seriously and try to find dramatic and psychological meaning in the paradox that the play represents, not the tragic fall but the tragic rise of a great man" (Berringer III.109).

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